

SELECTIONS

FROM

PAPERS ON INDIGO CULTIVATION

IN

Lower Bengal,

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND A FEW NOTES,

BY E. J. D. D. D.

No. II.

Calcutta:

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INTRODUCTION.

IN 1858, the present Compiler published the first number of these Selections. Since then, the Indigo Question has occupied a prominent share of the public attention, but the preponderance of the Indigo Planters in the public Press, and the special favour they found with the late Administration, kept the general public ignorant of the issue to which the question was rapidly advancing. The truth unravelled by the writer two years ago, has, however, at last forced its way, and it rests with the authorities as to what tongue they will give to it.

That the ryots are unwilling to sow indigo—that they do not find it remunerative—that they are groaning under the evils of a complete anarchy,— are not new discoveries, and he who doth not believe in them seeth not the light and hearkeneth not to reason. The Commission of Enquiry about to be appointed will, it is to be hoped, so unveil the true state of things, that none will dare ignore it, though the drill to which the ryot is being subjected by means of Coercion Acts and repressive forces, does not strengthen the hope the writer is so sanguine to entertain from his too true a knowledge of oppression on the one hand and suffering on the other.

The appointment of the Commission is one thing gained in the right direction. On it he insisted earnestly in his last publication, and he cannot be oblivious of his almost personal obligation to the Government and the Legislature for this gracious concession to the Public demand. But the Commission should be supplemented by other effective measures before the Indigo Problem can be satisfactorily solved. And these measures are none other than the recognition legislatively of the principle of equal law and equal justice for all persons of whatever race, origin, and creed, and the delegation of the important function of enforcing this principle to persons fitted alike by ability, courage, and conscience to carry it out. Until this consummation, so devoutly desired, is effected, the Indigo Question cannot be settled.

The papers selected are intended to supplement the "Selections" which the Government of Bengal have already published on the subject. It may, however, be added, that, coupled with those Selections, the papers herein contained afford the most indubitable testimony of the iniquity of the Indigo ~~fraud~~

tem, and the deplorable condition of the Indigo ryot. The proposed Commission cannot elicit stronger proofs than those mentioned above, but the Commission will be a living reality, symbol of a power that will be felt, and its decree cannot, therefore, be disputed.

The Native community should however remember that the Indigo question is not simply a "contest between Labour and Capital;" it has a deeper seat and wider range than that. It is a question as much affecting the social as the political future of the people of Bengal. In fact as will this question be solved, so will their future destiny be determined.

CALCUTTA, }
The 11th May, 1860. }

RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIGO PLANTERS AND RYOTS.

FROM

A. R. YOUNG, Esq.,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

TO

THE OFFICIATING COMMISSIONER OF
THE NUDDEA DIVISION.

Fort William, the 21st July, 1859.

JUDICIAL.

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of the letter from your Office, noted in the margin, with their original enclosures, and, in reply, to communicate the following observations of the Lieutenant-Governor on the question which was referred by Mr. Grote for the orders of Government .—

No. 74, 15th April last.	
No. 82, 15th April last.	
No. 116, 16th June 1859	

2nd.—It is not necessary in disposing of this matter to go further back than to the proceedings in 1859, out of which this reference has arisen. The facts of the case appear to be these :—

3rd.—Some ryots applied to Mr. Eden, the Joint Magistrate of Baraset for protection from Mr. Larmour, who, they said, was going to plough up their lands and sow them with Indigo. Complaints of the same sort had been before made to the Magistrate by a number of ryots on various dates, commencing from November last. On receiving the last complaint, Mr. Eden passed the following order, addressed to the Deputy Magistrate of the Sub-division :—"Since the ryots can sow in their lands whatever crop they like, no one can, without their consent and by violence, sow any other crop. Ordered, therefore, that the original petition

be sent to the Deputy Magistrate of Mitterhaut, in order that he may send Policemen to the ryots' lands to prevent any disturbances that are likely to ensue from any compulsory cultivation of their lands, and instruct them, that, if the land is really that of the ryots, not to allow any one to interfere with it. If the ryots wish to sow Indigo or any thing else, the Policemen will see that there is no disturbance,"

4th.—Mr. Larmour complained of this order, alleging that the effect of it had been to make the ryots believe that they would receive every encouragement from the Magistrate's Court in not sowing Indigo, for which some of them have received advances and contracted.

5th.—Mr. Grote thought Mr. Larmour's remonstrance well founded, and disapproved of the Magistrate's order above quoted. Mr. Grote does not maintain, at least he does not in this correspondence assert, that Mr. Larmour can have had any right to compel the ryots by force to sow the Indigo, or any right himself to sow Indigo, on their land, and he does not deny that disputes on such affairs are matter for settlement in the Civil Court. But he objects to that part of the order by which the Police are directed not to allow any one to interfere with the ryots in the cultivation of their land, if the land is undoubtedly that of ryots, on the ground that this condition involves an inquiry by the Darogah into the point of ownership, as his action is to depend entirely upon the result of such an inquiry. This, Mr. Grote says, is throwing on the Darogah the entire responsibility of action, a course which he looks upon as very responsible. He considers the Magistrate's order inconsistent with the principle on which Mr. Eden himself founds, which principle Mr. Grote, as His Honor understands him, does not contest, namely, that the contracts between Indigo Manufacturers and Ryots for the cultivation and sale of Indigo plant, when disputes arise between them on the ground of alleged breach by either party, are matters exclusively for the settlement of the Civil Courts, and matters in which the Magistracy and Criminal Courts have no jurisdiction, and with which the Police have no right and ought not to interfere on one side or the other, any more than in disputes about the Civil Courts. Disapproving of the order on the above grounds, Mr. Grote instructed Mr. Eden to amend

his order, by making it known that it was not the intention of the order "that Police protection should be given to such ryots as had entered into engagements with the factory, and were now on any pretence holding back from their performance." Mr. Eden obeyed these instructions, but he supported the consistency and propriety of his own views, explaining that in matter of fact the ryots in this case were undisputed owners of the land, and were in possession of it; that Mr. Larmour put forward no claim to it, and that the order applied only to land in such circumstances. Mr. Eden has urged his point with much intelligence and force. Mr. Grote, however, adheres to his original view, and holds that all that ought to be required of the Police, in cases of such complaints as those made to Mr. Eden in this case, is that they are to prevent, if they can, actual disturbance of the peace, and if they cannot prevent (a breach of the peace), to arrest and bring to justice those who disturb it.

6th.—It is to be observed, that it is not to be assumed that in the case out of which this discussion arose, Mr. Larmour or his servants acted in any way improperly or illegally. Mr. Larmour has denied all intention to use force. The general question in no way depends upon the merits of this particular dispute; it relates only to the course which the Police ought to adopt when such disputes as this arise.

7th.—The question on which Government is to decide is, which of these two courses should be prescribed to the Police in disputes of this nature—the course of protecting the undoubted possessor of the land from the physical interference of strangers who came upon the land, that it shall be cultivated only with Indigo, on the allegation that the possessor of the land has promised to cultivate a certain quantity of land with Indigo, for sale to them at a fixed price, or the course of announcing that no protection will be given against such physical interference to ryots who are under engagements (for the cultivation and supply of Indigo) with those strangers, and hold back from performing their engagements, and of standing by until the dispute reaches the point of a breach of the peace, when whosoever breaks the peace is to be arrested and taken to the Magistrate to be punished.

8th.—This is a most important practical question, and the Lieutenant-Governor thinks it is strange that it has not been authoritatively determined before, as cases of this sort are of daily occurrence. On the one hand, the manufacturer of Indigo dye, which is one of the staples of these provinces, affirms that, if the ryots are protected by the Police from such interference with their cultivation as is described, no Indigo plant will be cultivated wherefrom he can manufacture the dye. On the other hand, the ryot affirms that, if he is unprotected under such circumstances, he is deprived of the use of his possession, and sent to prison for resisting the trespasser.

9th.—The Lieutenant-Governor assumes that Mr. Eden's principle, as above stated, is, beyond all question, the true exposition of the law of the matter as it stands, and he cannot agree with Mr. Grote in thinking that Mr. Eden's order is inconsistent with that principle. If Mr. Grote's objection is well founded, it is beyond the province of the Police, as throwing undue responsibility of action upon them, to protect any man in the possession of his property against force, if the force is exerted by persons who allege promises in their favour. His argument is, that in all such cases the duty of the Police is to stand still, unless a breach of the peace is imminent, in that case they are to prevent such breach if they can, and if they cannot, they are to arrest whomsoever they find in the act of breaking the peace.

10th.—It appears to the Lieutenant-Governor that this doctrine is untenable; he cannot suppose that any one would think of maintaining it when the property in question is personal. If a traveller is passing along the highway, and is surrounded by men who insist upon his delivering to them his purse out of his pocket, alleging that he had promised to do so, no one, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, will maintain that a Police Darogah and his men, who are paid to repress all outrages, ought to stand by without interfering, on the ground that they cannot tell without inquiry whether the purse belongs to the passenger or not, and that, therefore, it is throwing too much responsibility upon the Police to expect them to take any action in such an affair, until there is a breach of

the peace. Even so, the Lieutenant-Governor does not see how the Police could escape the responsibility eventually of coming to a conclusion from the fact passing before his eyes, and taking a line of action founded upon that conclusion; for suppose the passenger to prepare to resist those who offer to take his purse, are the Police to hold his hands for fear of the parties coming to blows? or if he do resist, and so a breach of the peace occurs, is he to be taken up for causing it? That would be to act on the conclusion that the assailants had a right to force the purse out of the passenger's possession; or the assailants to be taken up, that would be a line of action founded on the contrary conclusion. As then that Police must be driven at last into assuming the responsibility of coming to a rational conclusion under the circumstances, as to whether the party resorting to force has a right to do so or not, what reason can there be to prohibit them from so acting at first before any such calamity has happened?

11th.—The Lieutenant-Governor is unable to see any difference of principle when the case is one of forcible entry, which is no less an outrage, when without colour of law, than the forcible seizure of personal property; and he believes that in any case unconnected with Indigo, no one would question the propriety of the Police interfering to protect a subject from such an outrage. Suppose the case reversed, and that these ryots, alleging that Mr. Larmour had promised to let them have the use of houses and grounds, had entered that gentleman's premises, and insisted on sowing his garden with rice, or had taken possession of his factory to store their grain in it, the Lieutenant-Governor doubts if Mr. Grote would hold that, on Mr. Larmour's call for protection on the Police, it would be throwing too much responsibility on the Darogah to expect him to act on the conclusion that Mr. Larmour had a right to such protection under the circumstances.

12th.—Indeed, every Police Officer must act in the exercise of his power or functions on his own responsibility, and he could not be relieved from that necessity without making him altogether useless. Nor is it easy to see a case in which the responsibility of forming a rational conclusion under the circumstances can be less, than one in which a party

pretending no claim beyond what may or may not be valid ground of civil action, and setting up no pretence of ownership or possession, or right of possession, in particular field, which field is known to be in the undisputed possession of another party, sends men upon that field to cause it to be sown with something the possessor of the fields objects to.

13th.—It is the course which Mr. Grote has prescribed in the present case, which appears to the Lieutenant-Governor to be inconsistent with the principle above laid down, and certainly to be open to the objection that it throws undue responsibility on the Police. By this course the Police were prohibited from protecting in the use of their own land such ryots as had engagements with the Factory, and were now on any pretence holding back from the performance of their bargains. How is the Darogah to ascertain whether the ryot has or has not made such an engagement? There is nothing in what passes before his eyes to show how the facts stand. He cannot know the fact or form a rational guess on the point without *quasi* judicial enquiry, and it is quite certain that he has no authority to enter into any such enquiry, and no power to obtain the evidence, without which no conclusion upon the question could be formed. This alone seems a fatal objection.

14th.—There is, however, a stronger objection to this course of proceeding, namely, its substantial injustice; supposing the Police Darogah to be a proper functionary, to try the question of the mutual civil obligations of the two parties, he is, by the proposed course of procedure, directed, as it were, to execute judgment in favour of the plaintiff, if he decides the one issue of engagement or no engagement in his favour. The ryot may confess the engagement, and still may have many irresistible pleas to avoid consequence the opposite party insists upon. Nevertheless, judgments to be given and executed against him without having one of pleas or pretences as they are called, such a system of procedure would be unjust.

15th.—For example, it is stated to be a common occurrence for a ryot to say that he is willing, according to his engagement, to sow many beegums with Indigo, and that he has land fit for the purpose, but that he is

not willing to sow his best land with that comparatively unprofitable crop, as his best land is capable of growing what will be many times more remunerative to him. A fairer plea cannot be imagined, but it must be ignored in the course of procedure laid down by Mr. Grote, which, in fact, leaves the Planter's peons to select for Indigo what fields they please, supported passively, to say the least, by the Police.

16th.—The Lieutenant-Governor cannot but disapprove of a Police order of this character.

17th.—The truth is, that disagreements of the character in question are by their very nature subjects for judicial decision, which cannot be adjusted without fully hearing both parties. There is no doubt, that as the law now stands, the Moonsiff's Court or the higher Civil Courts are the only authorities who have lawful cognizance of them. To these courts, therefore, both parties should be left. If either party to the contract conceive himself to be wronged by the other, it is for him to sue the other party. In the supposed case the Indigo planter is the party conceiving himself to be wronged. It is for him, therefore, not to judge his own case, and to execute by his own peons his own judgment in his own favour, but to sue the ryot in the Civil Court, where an impartial decision is passable, the ryot has a right to be protected against any other course.

18th.—It may be that it would be well if speedier means existed of getting the case adjudged, and specific performance judicially ordered, or substantial damages awarded, than the Moonsiff's Court afford. But to introduce in effect into the system of procedure in such cases the action of a power which cannot form a judgment on the question in dispute, and does not pretend to do so, is to take a step which certainly is not a step in the right direction.

19th.—In his letter of the 6th ultimo, Mr. Grote makes some remarks from which the Lieutenant-Governor infers that he is not sure that "the usual practice all over the country" in regard to the cultivation of Indigo is supported by law. But any thing is supported by law to which all parties interested agree. If the ryots agree to such minute interference

with their crop as is described, all is as it should be. But whenever both parties do not agree, neither can be allowed to go beyond his lawful rights, whatever they may be.

20th.— It would be greatly to be lamented if any thing should check Indigo cultivation so long as it is a wholesome commercial enterprise. But it cannot be supported at the expense of justice, and no wholesome trade requires such support. If the cultivation be, as it must be presumed to be, certainly as it ought to be, for the mutual advantage of both the producer and purchaser of the plant, it is not very easy to see why one party should be less eager for it than the other. If the ryot finds that on certain sorts of land at the price offered him for Indigo plant that cultivation pays him better than any other, if he finds that when he cultivates Indigo he is no less secure from ill-treatment than other people of his class, and if the peons and native servants of the Factory are not allowed to harass him so as to disgust him with the business, the manufacturer should be in no difficulty in such a wholesome state of things, he should have no more lawsuits to engage in, and should have no more cause either to fear or to hope from the interference of the Magistrate and the Police than any other man engaged in fair trade. It is the wholesome state of things which should be encouraged. But if the case be otherwise in any particular district, or with any particular Planter, the obvious inference is, that either Indigo is not naturally suited to that place, or that the remedy is in the hand, not of the Police, but of the Indigo Manufacturer himself.

(Signed) A. R. YOUNG,
Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

THE INDIGO SYSTEM AND SOWINGS.

THE RYOT AS A FREE AGENT.—It would appear from the report of the Indigo Planters' Association's meeting (of the 18th June 1859), that some evil-disposed magistrates, being moved, and seduced by the instigation of the devil, have been daring to talk to the ryots of rights. Well may Mr. Theobald be indignant, and talk of a petition to Parliament.

The idea of a ryot's rights!! Is it not laid down in Magna Charta, that a black man has no rights? Well may the Britishers fear that we are about to lose India from the incompetency of our rulers, when Magistrates begin to talk of a nigger's rights. As Mr. Theobald indignantly observes, "for Magistrates to encourage what is at once contrary to law and morality, and to the fair interests of capital, is intolerable. If Magistrates choose to step out of the proper line and teach rights, they should proclaim the planters' rights as well as those of the ryots. Abstractedly it is true a ryot is free to cultivate or not to cultivate indigo or any other production. But if he takes money for a particular cultivation for a particular season, whether of indigo or anything else, he *pro tanto* exchanges his freedom for a new condition; and a Magistrate who tells the ryots they are still free while under such engagements, preaches false doctrine and bad law, and is a firebrand to the population!!!" Now we all know, at least we have all been told, time after time, that the Secretary to the Indigo Planters has a monopoly of legal knowledge; he has taken every opportunity of impressing upon the public, that he is the only man in India who knows anything whatever about the matter; he is, in fact, a walking *corpus juris*. We shall not, therefore, of course endeavour to dispute a question of law with so distinguished a jurist, we only proceed *ad questionem facti*, is it "contrary to law and morals, and to the fair interests of capital," that a magistrate should endeavour to preserve intact the rights of the ryots to do what they like with their own? The ryots have interests of capital just as much as the planter. Is it contrary to morals that the Magistrate should refuse to allow a planter to come with a few hundred ploughs, and, under the pretence that the ryot's grand-father had borrowed money from him, which had never been repaid, sow the ryot's land with indigo, and never pay him for the produce? What would Mr. Theobald say, if the Government was to determine to supply the deficiency in the revenue, by sending down a detachment of troops to every indigo factory in the country, and if the officer in command of the party was to seize the planters by the ears, and order them at once to manufacture so many hundred maunds of indigo, at a price considerably less than the actual cost of production; and even out of the small sum given them to deduct one-third on various grounds—say, for instance, for stamps, &c., never used; or if the officer, in the case of the planter, being recu-

sant, was to lock him up in a godown, merely giving him enough to keep him alive ; or supposing him to be an influential man, with relations likely to make a row, to forward him secretly from Kishnaghur to Myrmensing, and thence to Dacca, and then round by Malda, keeping him there, until he signed a bond, agreeing to everything that was demanded of him, and then, and not till then, releasing him? Would Mr. Theobald call this a contract, and consider it against law and morals, if a Magistrate was to tell the planter who came to lodge a complaint, that such a mode of increasing the revenue was illegal? Yet we should much like to know what would be the difference between Government treating the planters thus and the planters treating the ryots as they do now. There is no more a contract in the one case than the other. We do not profess to know as much about the law of contracts as Mr. Theobald, but we certainly always thought that there must be two parties to a contract, and that there must be at least some outward show of free will on both sides. We were not before aware that a mere assertion, on the part of the planter, that he, many years ago, advanced a small sum of money to a man, was sufficient to bind over that man's descendants, from generation to generation, as slaves to the party making the advance. Mr. Theobald pretends to believe—it can only be a pretence—that a ryot comes voluntarily and engages to sow a certain amount of land with a certain crop, for a certain season ; but he must know well that this is not the case ; but that, if even an actual money advance is ever made, it is some trifling sum, not sufficient to support a man for a week ; and does he suppose, for one moment, that a man, as fond of freedom as a Bengalee cultivator proverbially is, would exchange this freedom for “ a new condition ” for the sake of a few annas, which he knows he will have to repay one-thousand-fold, when he could, with equal ease, obtain the same sum from a native merchant, and only have to pay twenty-fold? It is not honest of the Secretary of the Association to argue as if any such thing as a *bond fide* voluntary contract existed between a planter and his ryots.

But even for the sake of argument, supposing that the contract was a voluntary *bond fide* engagement, for the mutual advantage of both parties, does a man by entering into such a contract “ *pro tanto* exchange

his condition of freedom for a new condition ? ” And is a Magistrate in the wrong who prevents a planter from forcibly compelling a ryot to fulfil such contracts ? Certainly not, a contract to cultivate indigo is exactly the same as a contract to do anything else, and a ryot disputing the contract has as much right to demand protection of person and property from all forcible attempts to compel him to fulfil his contract as any one else, until the claim is decided by a Civil Court. If Sir Morton Peto, or any other eminent contractor, was to contract to make a railway in this country, and was not to make it in the manner that the Railway Company thought they had a right to expect, would the Railway Company be acting legally in sending a number of myrmidons to bring Sir Morton before them, to carry off all his furniture and jewels, to ill-treat his family, and ultimately to flog him and confine him in a damp cellar until he satisfied all demands of the Company, and in addition gave handsome douceurs to every clerk and porter in the establishment ? We expect that the police would interfere, and we think that Mr. Theobald would not question the legality of their interference. Is there then one code of law and morals for Morton Peto’s and another for Shaik Buxoo’s ?

But this is on the false supposition that a voluntary contract actually exists. Let us take things as they really are. Suppose that Sir Morton Peto was out, and that a messenger from the Railway Company was to come and chuck down a bag of rupees in his door-way, and tell his family that it was an advance for a Railway he was to construct at such and such a price : suppose that the money was not ever picked up, but that the messenger was to call upon a couple of his own servants to witness that the money was actually thrown down : suppose that, on account of Sir Morton’s absence, his nearest male relative was seized and was carried off to the Company’s Office, and the end of a pen put into his hand to touch, and that the touch of the pen by Sir Morton’s cousin was to be considered by the head of the office as equivalent to Sir Morton’s signature to a contract that he had never seen : or suppose that the contract was never actually written at all—would the Railway Company be justified in calling upon the Police to compel Sir Morton to make the Railway ? Would Sir Morton be held *pro tanto* to have ex-

changed his freedom for a new condition ? if not, why should the ryot be held to have done so under precisely similar circumstances ? Would a Magistrate who refused to punish Sir Morton be held up as "a fire-brand to the population ?" We trow not ; but, according to Mr. Theobald's unprejudiced "judicial mind," he is one.—*Indian Field*, June 25, 1859.

OPIUM AND INDIGO.—There is one part of Mr. Theobald's report that deserves further notice, and this is the argument that "the Government, whose relation to the ryots in the open districts is very like that of the planters in the indigo districts, has found the want of a special law for the protection of its capital ; and the same law ought to be extended to the indigo districts." The most charitable way of viewing this assertion is to assume that Mr. Theobald knows as little of the system of opium cultivation as he pretends to do of the system of indigo cultivation. We need not go into the question on this occasion, though possibly we may hereafter. Suffice it to say that the opium is grown under advances, the cultivator brings his crop to the factory, is paid up at a very high rate in full, and his account closed within a week of the delivery of the drug ; his payments amounting to from Rupees 25 to 30, or sometimes Rupees 35 per beegah. The ryot who sows indigo has Rupees 2 forced upon him against his will : if he refuses it, he is imprisoned, beaten, and starved. Of this sum he gets fleeced before he leaves the premises. The average produce of a beegah fetches Rupees 2 ; if his produce is in excess of his advance, still he is kept on the books, and an old advance of thirty years before juggled into his accounts. Government from time to time changes the price which is paid for the opium, so as to assimilate it to the rates that the ryot could obtain for the *most profitable* crop. The planter has *never* changed his price, but has changed his measure for the worse : the measuring chain of old days was many feet shorter than the present chain. Government exercises no influence to induce the alteration to take their advances. The planter notoriously purchases zemindarees and putnees to obtain power to compel his tenant to sow for him. The Government agencies are superintended by gentlemen of great responsibility and high social standing, who have no interest themselves in the produce of the factories. The indigo factories are either superintended by the owner, a man whose real

English feelings have been deadened by a long colonial life, impunity from punishment, social or legal, irresponsibility, and the working of a system which he probably found in force when he came to the country, and which is too profitable for him to care to alter until compelled to do so ; he is of course pecuniarily interested in getting as much indigo sown as he can, and as he has not a monopoly like the Government, but has a number of competitors all around him, he is sorely tempted to have recourse to the tyranny and oppression which have made the indigo cultivation the greatest curse under which the Bengal peasant suffers. Where the planter himself does not manage his own estate, it is made over to a manager, generally selected for his powers of nigger-driving, who receives a commission on the out-turn, and whose appointment depends entirely upon the amount of the dye he can produce. However, the systems are so entirely opposite, that it would take up column after column if we were to proceed to point out all the points in which they differ ; suffice it to say that so long as England keeps India the planters never shall and never will have an Act investing them with the powers exercised by the Government opium agents. We extract elsewhere a very sensible letter on this subject from a Mr. Hutchinson, who resides apparently in the centre of the greatest indigo-growing district in Bengal, in most of whose arguments we concur.—*Indian Field*, November 26, 1859.

[The following is the letter referred to above.]

To the Editor of the Bengal Hurkaru.

DEAR SIR,

IN the proceedings of the Central Committee Indigo Planters' Association, dated 11th instant, and published in the *Hurkaru* of the 19th idem, I find that the Secretary remarked that " the Government, whose relation to the ryots in the Opium districts is very like that of the planters' in the Indigo districts, has found the want of a special law for the protection of its capital ; and the same law ought to be extended to capital employed in Indigo cultivation. Do the planters

actually want the *same special law*, and are they prepared to take it for "better and for worse?" If they have the *same special law*, will they act like the Government? On the representation of the Opium ryots the Government has sanctioned an increase of 8 or 12 annas on every seer of Opium. Will the planters do the same to their Indigo ryots? Are the planters prepared to close their Indigo Concern at the *same time* with the Government, should the latter give up Opium cultivation? It must be borne in mind, before the planters make a rash promise to suit their present interest, that there is a voice already raised in England against the Government for its connection with the Opium trade, and that voice will ultimately prevail.

The Government, for divers reasons, may have *special laws* for the protection of its interest, which, in reality, is the interest of the community; so the planters need not look enviously at the temporary gains of the Government from the Opium trade. There will come a time when the planters will be allowed to manufacture Opium if they choose, but in the meanwhile let them study political economy, and know that Indigo as well as Opium can always be had for what it costs to produce it.

Like other traders the Indigo Planters must toil and win, or lose, without the intervention of a *special law*. Have the manufacturers of Silk or Saltpetre, Sugar or Tea, a *special law* to enable them to procure the raw materials from the ryots? Are not these traders of greater importance to the community than the ridiculously few proprietary Indigo planters whom we could name and count upon our fingers?

No legislation is necessary for the supply of Indigo leaf. The ryots will produce that *voluntarily* if they are adequately paid. The price of every commodity has been enhanced of late, save that of Indigo leaf, for which the planters will not consent to pay to the ryots more than the price of bygone years. No planter will, on his honour as a gentleman, contradict my assertion. For the said unreasonableness, and other minor oppressions, the ryots do not agree to *fresh advances*; hence the constant rows between the planters and the ryots.

Perhaps the planters may urge, "never mind the *fresh advances*, let the ryots pay us the old debts." To this I would reply that the planters themselves have reduced the ryots to their present state of irretrievable indebtedness by advancing money on imprudent and usurious conditions, and therefore the planters, like other tradesmen, must pay the penalty of their rash speculations. The planters may sue and win, and light their cigars with the decrees, if they please; but no good man would sympathize with persons who encourage immorality by making indiscreet advances to the needy ryots of Bengal.

In justice to the Secretary and the planters I should appear in my proper name, therefore I beg to subscribe,

Dear Sir, yours faithfully,
S. W. HUTCHINSON.

HAUSKHALLY, NUDDEA, }
The 21st November, 1859. }

To the Editor of the Bengal Hurkaru.

DEAR SIR,

I FIND that in treating on Indigo matters in the *Hurkaru* of the 10th instant, you have wasted much space to no purpose by quotations from the *Calcutta Review* and *The Indian Field*. The public at large do not want to know what Mr. Bomwetsch or Mr. E. Underhill thinks of the planters, and most of your readers care a fig whether the "occupying tenants" in Indigo districts are better fed and clad than their sable brethren in other parts of Bengal. The quotations are inapplicable to the present demand of the planters and occupying tenants, and a sound lawyer would have eschewed the testimony of Mr. E. Underhill in the present instance. Their demand hinges on the principles of free trade, *voluntary* labour, and *adequate* wages—remuneration, and it can be determined only by the accepted rules of political economy, a science sadly neglected by the Anglo Indians, including Editors, Priest, and Planters, though each and all of them have their ambition and visions of honorary seats at the Council Board. Amongst other things, Mr. E. Underhill, it seems, does not approve of "occupying tenants managing

the lands as they please ;" and he would subject the occupying ryots to the will and taste of the zemindars and planters, because the lands near the farms and factories look so pretty. If so, with what consistency, or show of reason, could the occupying tenants be made to pay rent for lands which they may not use or cultivate as they please, it is hard to guess ; perhaps you will enlighten us. Moreover, is the pretty appearance of lands near factories a criterion of the happiness in the home of the ryots ?

There can be no doubt that it is not the planters' interest to oppress the " occupying tenants," and that planters are driven to oppression (as Mr. E. Underhill says) by the falsehood and roguery of the ryots. Tradesmen learn to conduct their business from experience, planters should do the same. We hear them complaining against the ryots, and calling them rogues, niggers, liars, and a hundred similar epithets. If the ryots are really so bad, why not avoid doing business with them ? Do not engage them, nor make advances for Indigo leaf. Employ coolies and Boonnahs, and thereby teach the ryots that honesty is the best stepping-stone to competence and contentment. Boonnahs and coolies can always be had for what they cost to procure them, and there is the country with all its fatness before the planter. On his skill and honest dealings depends his fortune. He has the advantage of the law too in his favour. Of all persons, the planter has best cause not to complain against the law of the country. It is always within his reach, and his wealth and position greatly assist him to wield against reculant ryots. But I am digressing, and it is time to conclude. Before doing so please let me hold you by the small finger. You require a little support when treading on Indigo ground. Though I have not seen any one of the charges or petitions of the ryots, yet from what I hear, I can safely tell you that amongst other things, their chief demand is to be left alone ; they do not wish to take advance, nor enter into contracts for Indigo leaf ; so you need not fear of the ryots " repudiating their engagements." They are not willing to enter into contracts. It is the planter that is anxious to have the ryots do so, for it is less expensive.

Instead of indulging in malicious innuendoes, brutal attacks on individual characters, crude and cursory quotations from depositions, and

silly verbal criticisms, editors of *Anglo-Indian journals* would do well were they to write, and invite discussion, on the present demand of their planter friends and constituents, and the Indigo ryots. The demand is based on political economy, and planters that can write should join. They will find this less expensive than club and spear law. Government and the community will listen to reason, but never succumb to brute force.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours obediently,

W. L. HUTCHINSON.

HAUSKHALLY, NUDDEA, }
12th January, 1860. }

THE evidence is fast gathering to fulness. It is now patent to the world that the Indigo Planters are a class of petty tyrants, and that the ryots in the indigo planting districts are treated no better than the cotton producers of the Slave States. The truth is no longer confined to the bosom of Mofussil society. All that we have hitherto said against the class have been proved to be no colouring. One of the latest witnesses to the fact is a European gentleman, a resident in an indigo-growing district. Mr. S. W. Hutchinson, in the *Hurkaru* of the 23rd instant, calmly writes :—" No legislation is necessary for the supply of indigo leaf. The ryots will produce that *voluntarily*, if they are adequately paid. The price of every commodity has been enhanced of late to the ryots more than the prices of by-gone years. No planter will on his honour as a gentleman contradict my assertion." A little further on, he says, " for the said unreasonableness and other minor oppressions, the ryots do not consent to *fresh* advances ; hence the constant rows between the planters and the ryots. Perhaps the planters may urge, " never mind *fresh* advances, let the ryots pay us the old debts ! " But " the planters themselves have reduced the ryots to their present state of irretrievable indebtedness by advancing money on imprudent and usurious conditions." No plaintiff would wish for better evidence in his favour from the mouth of his opponent's witness. Here is not only a simple assertion, but an assertion coupled with a challenge. "*No planter will, on his honour as a gentleman, contradict my assertion.*"

Verily this is a fine pass for the planters ;—they are threatened to be bullied into confession. We shall be heartily gratified to see some brave spirit take up the glove, for it is of a nature that cannot well be passed by. In it are at stake their *honour* and *reputation*. Be a coward and lose reputation, or maintain it at the risk of defeat. But what is this assertion to which such a merciless condition is attached ? Why, it is nothing more or less than that the employment of forced labour in the cultivation of indigo, and forced labour of the most odious kind, is part and an essential part of the indigo planting system in Bengal. “The ryots will voluntarily produce that, if they are adequately paid.” The plain construction of this is that the ryots of Bengal are as yet driven to their work by the Bengal Legrees, by the wrack and the pock ; that, far from receiving adequate prices for their marketable labour, they are forced to live on advances, nay to pay their *old debts* (Heaven knows when made and how contracted, and to what amount) ; give up the use of their land, the use of their ploughs, the use of their limbs even, for the raising of the indigo crop, the profit on which is to go solely to gorge the avarice of their usurers ; while the poor wretches, with their famished families, are reduced to starvation ;—compliance to the will of the tyrant all the while being secured by *minor oppressions*, by which mild phrase Mr. Hutchinson no doubt intends putting in iron, locking up in chunam godowns, horse-whipping, and if need be, looting and setting fire to houses. This is the picture of the independent Briton drawn by a friendly hand ; by such means as these does he develop the resources of the country, and promote the welfare of her sons ; in such a way as this he civilizes the nation ; with such motives as these he earnestly petitions Parliament for settling his class in colonies throughout the land ; such are the men who style themselves the true representatives of the British public !!!

The worst feature of the case is that the law will afford no remedy. The planter is above the law. He laughs at it, he scorns it, he defies it. It was only a few months ago that Mr. MacArthur, of the Maergunge Factory in Zillah Jessore, was fined for a piece of factory outrage, and what is more, shown up pretty conspicuously in the newspapers. Hear from a correspondent about his further doings :—

"We hear on good authority that the people of some villages within the sub-division of Magoorah in Jessore, have complained to the authorities of the oppressions of the notorious Mr. MacArthur of Meergunge Factory, who was a short time ago fined for unlawfully keeping several men in irons. It appears that the villagers refused to sow indigo for his factory on the terms dictated by him, consequently the above planter threatened to plunder and burn their villages.

"We are informed that since the above complaint was made, the said planter has actually plundered some houses of the villagers in the face of the police who seem to be paid by the planter, and, not being satisfied with plunder obtained on this occasion, is again preparing to plunder and demolish all the houses of the villagers who complained against him."—*Hindoo Patriot*, December 3, 1859.

THE CEREMONY OF ADVANCING.—The worship of the blue Mammon is yearly inaugurated with the ceremony of making advances. Most of our readers who hear so much of the liberality of the factory in making these advances and the rascality of the ryot in not working it off have probably never witnessed it. A description therefore will not be unacceptable to them.

About the months of Kartic and Aghran the factory ameen makes out a list of all the cultivator class of ryots inhabiting the villages which comprise a factory line, with the number of ploughs and bullocks, and the extent of land which each individual is master of at the time, and submits it to the Gomashtha or the native Superintendent who, after consulting with his European superior as to the number of beegahs which would be that year laid under indigo plant, makes a distribution of the whole quantity, noting down opposite the names of the ryots in the list, and the number of beegahs which each of them would be required to cultivate. This is done by the factory servants, of course without consulting the cultivators or even endeavouring to ascertain whether they would be able to meet the engagements to be imposed upon them. A month or fifteen days after this, the ryots are ordered to

repair to the factory, and the factory Tagedgir brings them much as a shepherd would drive in his flock. Very generally the advance-money is paid by the native Gomashtha, but in some cases, to meet conscience and public opinion, the task is undertaken by the Superintendent himself. The ryots crowd in the open compound before the verandah, where the Saheb sits in a chair surrounded by his native subordinates, who squat on the floor with the account books, and with purses containing money. If there be a big tree in the compound the ryots are fortunate enough to obtain some protection from the sun, if not, they are obliged to stand exposed to its rays. The Mohurir of the factory then calls out the name of a ryot from the list before him and then sings aloud to the effect :—" You Nazir Mahmood of Neelcooteepoor, last year you cultivated two beegahs of land with indigo, but as by the report of the ameen it appears that you have purchased additional cattle, you are to cultivate one beegah more this season, you are booked for three beegahs from this year. But the factory accounts show a balance of four rupees against your name, so deducting that sum from six rupees, which is the amount to which you are entitled this season for three beegahs, there are left two rupees, from which again deduct two annas on account of a stamp paper for your kubooleet, 12 annas for the price of indigo seed to be supplied to you at four annas per beegah and six annas for the repair of roads at one anna on every rupee, in all making a total of one rupee and four annas, the sum which you are now to receive for the cultivation of three beegahs amounts to 12 annas. Now come forward and take it, the Saheb will pay you with his own hands." No sooner is this speech ended than, "Dohye Saheb," Nazir Mahmood screeches out, "Do not burden me with an additional beegah, for I will not be able to cultivate so many as three beegahs. I came here with the purpose of soliciting you to relieve me of one of the two beegahs which I have hitherto sown with indigo. For God's sake, take mercy on me, Saheb ; Allah has taken away from me only two months ago my eldest son, who was the prop of my old age and the chief assistant in my labours of the field, he it was who ploughed your indigo lands, and it was through his exertions that my whole family got a mouthful of paddy every day to support our strength. But he has for ever left us, and his two brothers are mere boys who have not yet learnt to hold the

plough. Since my eldest boy's death other afflictions have come upon me, somehow or other I am afflicted with a sore leg, for which, if I am not speedily cured, I will scarcely be able to go out to the fields myself. The new bullock reported by the Ameen was purchased by my son before his death, but has been mortgaged by me to defray the expense of his sickness and funeral. May God increase your riches and make you Governor of this country, but be kind enough to deliver me from your khata." "Neel hoga" is the brief answer of the Saheb. "Dohye Saheb," again shrieks out the man. A reply as brief as the first is impatiently vouchsafed. Nazir Mahmood becomes somewhat obstreperous, upon which the Tagedgir and Chuprasee bound towards him, and after a shower of blows and slaps, pull him forward. "Then kill me, you all," is the grumble with which Nazir Mahmood resigns himself to his fate. "Bring him here to receive his advance-money," calls out the Mohurir, and the man is shoved forward close to the Saheb. "Hold forth your hand," the man with great reluctance obeys, and the Superintendent drops three quarter pieces in his hands. The Saheb then asks him "how now, have you got your money?" "Yes, Sir," doles out Nazir, "but what am I to do with these three little silver bits?" "Throw it in yonder stream of water, if you like," is the prompt reply. Another ryot is called. The same scene, with some little difference in the details, is enacted until the whole ceremony is concluded, or in some cases the Saheb, tired of the business, and hearing his khansamah announce tiffin or breakfast, hastens to satisfy craving nature, leaving the remainder in the hands of his Gomashta.—*Hindoo Patriot*, March 31, 1860.

THE CONTRACT.—Some speculation is of course afloat as to the sort and amount of evidence that the Magistrates will require from those who file complaints under the recently enacted Ryots' Coercion Act. Some Magistrates, probably, will be satisfied with the factory oath and the factory *khatta*; while others might insist upon additional testimony of a more trustworthy kind. Inexperienced Magistrates might even possibly call for the *kuboolat*, the deed of contract, for the preparation of which on stamp sheets they will observe entries in the *khatta* books of two annas or four annas against the Ryot.

Not a factory, we believe, will be able to produce a properly executed deed attesting an engagement, except planters who, like Mr. Mears, have agents in Magistrates like Mr. Skinner. The planter of these days no more thinks of spending the two or four annas he charges to the Ryot's account for stamp paper than he does of having the indigo plant measured by the old three cubits' chain. As to fabrication of documents, that to be of any service, must be done upon a scale practically impossible. The oath and the khatta will be the principal evidence producible, and the degree of dependance to be placed upon the latter as a voucher for cash payments may be deduced from the circumstance alone of how the stamp money is applied.

There is one description of kubooleuts, however, which might be produced in numbers. It is those which were executed years ago, when planters were more careful in their proceedings than they have of late found it necessary to be, and the term of which extends to the present year. We subjoin a true translation of one of these documents which most of our readers must be curious to see.

To .

This is written by me Scheedam Doss, this deed of contract for growing indigo. Whereas yourself and your brother —— purchased in 1260 *Sal* the —— factory, and you have since by partition and demarkation come into sole possession of the above factory and its outstandings; and whereas on an adjustment of the account resting on my previous contract to grow indigo for the above factory there appears a balance of rupees two against me. In consideration of those two rupees, and two rupees more which I now take in advance, I engage to cultivate two beegahs of land with indigo plant for your above named factory, from 1262 to 1271 *Sal*, being a period of ten years; I engage to deliver their produce annually at the factory, and according to former custom the price thereof shall be calculated at the rate of nine bundles per rupee. The price of seed, cost of conveyance, and of whatever other means of cultivation I may receive from the factory, shall be deducted therefrom. Should any balance remain in my favour, I shall receive it in cash. Should the balance be against me, I will discharge it by growing indigo in the

ensuing year on as many beegahs as shall be covered by the amount thereof, at the rate of two rupees per beegah. Should the price of the plant cover the amount of the advance, I shall annually take an advance to the extent abovementioned, during the term of this engagement. Should I make default in cultivating or selling the produce to any body else, I shall be liable to damages to the extent of the value of the corresponding quantity of wrought dye. To this effect I execute this deed according to the contract I have entered into. Dated ———

The above is a document from a factory in the Hooghly district, where the bundle is a considerably smaller measure than in the districts east of the Hooghly, where it is no measure at all, except of the rapacity, injustice, and power of the planter. This accounts for so many as nine bundles being contracted for at the rupee. The corresponding quantity of wrought dye means, at the pleasure of the planter, twenty to forty rupees, a rather heavy guarantee for the fulfilment of the contract, which again is protected by the material guarantee of the ryot's person and home, and the immaterial guarantee of his wife's honour.

Now, we ask any unprejudiced person whether any man who is a free agent will in his senses enter into a contract of the above description? Whether the document does not on the face of it bear evidence of its execution having been enforced by threats and intimidation? Whether it is not a record of tyranny and oppression, of misrule and misgovernment?

And, it is to give effect to such contracts that the Legislature has abolished the usual securities afforded by the law and the constitution of the established courts of justice.—*Hindoo Patriot*, April 7, 1860.

THE PLANTERS' DEFENCE.—The opponents of the indigo system will now have easy times of it, for their "enemy has written a book," or what is quite as much to the purpose, a letter to the daily press. Our object throughout has been to endeavour to draw a reply from some of the representatives of planting interest. We have tried the seductive, the abusive, the enquiry, the communicative, and fifty other different tones in treating of the subject, in the hopes of exciting that "calm and

temperate discussion" which the planters always profess to desire, but which they so carefully avoid. Having, however, baited our hook with a Missionary—a temptation which no planter was ever yet known to resist—we have at length got a rise, and having hooked our fish, can now afford to let him drown himself leisurely.

We own that we wish that the champion of the planters had been any one rather than Mr. Furlong, for we believe that he is one of about half a dozen planters who see the oppressive and dishonest nature of the existing system as well as we do ; but who, not having sufficient courage to break through the trammels of the planter caste, go on year after year growing Indigo under a system which they know to be wrong merely because their neighbours will not reform,—a course of proceeding to which they reconcile their consciences by endeavouring to deal as leniently with the natives as their occupation will admit, and avowing their readiness to adopt a better system if they only saw a chance of its *paying*, but who, however, we are afraid, do not take any very active measures to convince their brother planters of the errors of their ways. If we are to discuss the subject, we must say we had far sooner have seen the planting interest represented by a MacArthur, White, or Tripp, or some other of the many out-and-out Anglo-Saxons who really believe that the black man was created for the sole purpose of hoeing cane and growing crops without payment for the white man, who preach—not only preach, but also practise what they preach—that it really benefits the people of this country as a nation to be made to sow not what crop pays them best, but what crop pays the planter best ; and that it is absolutely necessary for the permanency of our rule in this country that the unfortunate ryots should be locked up in godowns, thrashed with stirrup leathers, carried about from district to district in confinement, and even sent occasionally abruptly from this *mortal vale* to that bourne whence no ryot returns, and where there are neither planters, naibs, gomashtas, nor stirrup leathers ; and perhaps, as regards this last mode of benefiting the people of this country, they are right. Death must be a relief to many an unfortunate cultivator after spending months in a dark, damp godown. But to return to Mr. Furlong. In a late issue we published a petition presented by certain ryots of a village named Sharbarri, in

Nuddea, to the Lieutenant-Governor, complaining that on the 17th of October last, the servants of Mr. Furlong forcibly entered their fields which were sown with mustard, and sowed a crop of indigo over the mustard ; that they had complained to the Magistrate of the district, who had heard the evidence of their witnesses, and believing the case to be *prima facie* proved had summoned the aggressors, but that he had not taken the necessary measures to secure the attendance of the defendants and that the case was consequently still pending in the Magistrate's Court. From correspondence sent to us for publication by Mr. Furlong, apparently with the full conviction that its perusal would convince the public of the falseness of the Sharbarri ryots' petitions, it would seem that on seeing the petition, in this journal, Mr. Furlong wrote to Mr. Sibbald, and asked him whether there was any truth in the petitioners' allegations, at the same time giving him a quiet hint that " he hoped to hear that they are entirely untrue, or at any rate greatly exaggerated." Mr. Sibbald, as a matter of course, says that the allegations are quite untrue, and to prove it argues, *first*, that if it had but been so, " the ryots would have complained to him, as he lives only two miles from the place." The ryots would, in the opinion of Mr. Sibbald, naturally have complained to the aggressor of his own acts. *Secondly*, he states that the indigo was clearly sown by the ryots themselves, as " can be proved to any one riding over the indigo lands," by the fact of mustard and indigo being seen growing in the same field. We should in our innocence have thought that this would be rather evidence of the truth of the ryots' complaints to the effect that indigo had been forcibly sown over their young mustard crop ; but Mr. Sibbald argues otherwise, and Mr. Furlong appears to be satisfied. The public are not so green or blue as to believe what Mr. Sibbald evidently expects them to believe, that ryots of their own free will sow indigo and mustard together. That they do sow a double crop is we fear too true, but it is only owing to the presence on the *mdt* of a number of *latteals* and *togeitgars*. Mr. Sibbald admits, however, that the ryots did complain to the Magistrate, and that the case is still undecided : three months after the outrage was committed, he endeavours to prove that the ryots have brought a false charge, by stating that the servants who are called by them *latteals* are his own regular servants, and are entered as such in the *issanabissee* of servants, which is annually filed

in the Magistrate's Court. The distinction is ridiculous, and is simply met by the fact that if they had not been latteals, they would not have been employed as factory servants. "The charge in the Magistrate's Court," says Mr. Sibbald, "was brought because he had previously brought a charge against the ryots for breaking up his indigo plant." Now, what does Mr. Sibbald mean by *his* indigo plant? Is it indigo sown by himself or his servants on his own *khamar* land? or is it the indigo which he wishes us to believe was voluntarily sown by the ryots on *their* lands under the factory advances, according to a *bond file* contract? We apprehend from his subsequent remarks that he means the latter. If so, how is this Mr. Sibbald's plant? He merely, according to his own showing, gives an advance for the cultivation of a certain amount of indigo to be delivered at a certain place at a certain time. Now what right has Mr. Sibbald to the plant, or to interfere in any way with the ryot until the time for the fulfilment of the contract has arrived? If when the time specified in the contract has expired the indigo is not forthcoming, Mr. Sibbald would, like any other person, have his action in the Civil Court for breach of contract, but it is always optional with the ryot to produce this indigo in any manner most convenient to himself; he may sow it in one place, plough it up and sow it again in another fifty times without Mr. Sibbald having any right to interfere. The land is the ryot's and not his, and the fact of Mr. Sibbald having the assurance to go into the Magistrate's Court, and complain of the ryot ploughing up his own crop sown by himself on his own land, is quite enough to prove the mistaken notions that the planters have of the relative position of themselves and their ryots. The ryot would be the sufferer by the destruction of his own crop, not the planter; and if the cultivation of indigo is voluntary, which Mr. Sibbald does not believe, but which he would have us believe, it is inconceivable that a ryot should go and injure his prospects by destroying his own crop. If the indigo was remunerative, what possible motive could he have in so doing? This very fact is to our minds conclusive evidence that the indigo is not sown voluntarily.

We now come to Mr. Furlong's other appearance in the columns of the *Englishman*, in which he attacks the Revd. Mr. Bomwetsch for

taking the part of the ryots, and from which it would appear that he had applied to the bishop to insist upon Mr. Bomwetsch shutting his eyes to all the oppression and tyranny which is going on around him. The bishop had better leave the matter alone we think ; for Mr. Furlong has 'no more right to demand his interference in the matter than the ladies who do not pay their milliners' bills have to ask the Archbishop of Canterbury to insist upon S. G. O. desisting from the letters on that subject, which he has just written to the *Times*. The planters, however, were the first to begin the attack upon the Missionaries ; they most unjustifiably and disgustingly commented upon the domestic affairs of a Missionary in the hopes of frightening him from telling what he knew of their system. In this they failed, and they must make the best they can of their case without the help of the bishop. The planters have one invariable motive to assign to all those who endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the cultivating classes, and it is perhaps the most puerile and ridiculous retort that could be imagined. They accuse all, from the highest official to the hard-working and self-denying Missionary, of "*jealousy*." What the planters have that others have not, which causes the universal jealousy of their class we cannot conceive, and we think that the planters would find it rather hard to explain their meaning.

The great authority brought forward to confute the charges against the planting system is Rammohun Roy, who declared, in the time of Lord W. Bentinck, that he had lately taken a tour through Bengal, and did not notice that the ryots in indigo districts were worse off than the rest of the people. He even thought them better clothed than the generality of the Natives. But what did Rammohun Roy know of the matter ; on a question of Unitarian doctrine, we do not doubt that he was a great authority, but he never was in a position to speak with authority as to the condition of the people in indigo districts ; he made a hurried tour through "several districts in Bengal" and his remarks are no more entitled to respect in the face of the most contrary evidence, than the letters to the *Times* of that most ridiculous imposter, Wingrove Cooke, on the same subject. Moreover, Rammohun's evidence was given thirty years ago, whereas we speak only of the condition of the people in the present time. This constant assertion that the peo-

ple in the Indigo districts are better off than those in Rice districts, and the usual deduction therefrom that Indigo cultivation is beneficial to the people, is one of the most fallacious arguments that have ever been put forward in defence of the planters ; it is the result of the most extraordinary confusion of cause and effect ; the fact is, that the Planters are in these districts because they are rich, not that the districts are rich because of the planters. What could a planter do in the marshes of a Rice district, where Indigo would not grow ? They naturally avoid such places, and go to the fine soil of Nuddea and Jessore, &c. The question for consideration is, not whether the inhabitants of a fertile province are better off *in spite of the planters* than the inhabitants of low marshes, where the nature of the soil confines them to the cultivation of one crop ? but we must consider what would have been the condition of the people of Nuddea, Jessore, and other Indigo districts, if they had been allowed the free use of their own splendid land for the growth of crops of tobacco, sugar-cane, jute, and oil seeds, or perhaps cotton, instead of being compelled to sow a crop which even the planters admit does not repay the ryots the cost of cultivation ? Moreover, we understand on excellent authority, that within the last three years, owing to the high price of grain, the people of the rice districts of Eastern Bengal are by no means in a state of "squalid poverty," but are in a most thriving and prosperous condition.

* Mr. Furlong admits that on his izharas one-tenth of the land is taken up with the cultivation of indigo, and as a matter of course this is one tenth of the very best land picked out by the factory servants. Then to show the magnanimous generosity of Nuddea planters, he proceeds to give figures, the object of which is to show that the Nuddea district embraces an area of 6,926,733 beegahs, that the indigo cultivation is 2,50,000 beegahs, and that therefore the planters, though really the landlords of fully two-thirds of the districts, do not occupy on their own account more than the thirtieth part of its area, a pretty good portion too when we consider that they have no right to any of it ; but we think we can show that Mr. Furlong's figures are as defective as the rest of his arguments. To find the net magnanimity of these gentlemen, we must deduct the portion of the land they take from the ryots, not from the

whole area, but from the *culturable portion of that area*, and must show what portion they could sow with indigo, and what having this option, they decline to avail themselves of, out of feelings of "*generosity to the people to whom the land belongs.*" From the area of 6,926,733 beegahs, we must first deduct one-third for fallow garden-grounds, woods, villages, roads, and waste (this being the proportion admitted by Mr. Furlong in his letter, when describing his own talook). We must next deduct another third to represent that portion of the district over which Mr. Furlong says the planters have no control ; and the total culturable area then over which the planters exercise zemindarree rights is brought down to 2,308,911 : deduct one-half of this as land suited to the cultivation of rice and other crops, but which will not grow indigo, and we have left in round numbers 1,154,455 beegahs, of which Mr. Furlong says 250,000 is cultivated with indigo ; so instead of appropriating only one-thirtieth of the area, they actually take one-fifth of the only land which would be of any use to them. And what right have they to this ? It is all very well to talk of their forbearance as landlords in taking so small a proportion, but their position as landlords gives them no more right to take a single beegah of the ryots' land than it does to sow the compound of Government House with indigo, or to build a factory on the Park at Barrackpore. Yet we find them admitting that they take 250,000 beegahs of the very best land in India, which, as far as the ryots are concerned, might as well be laying fallow ; for the cultivation of indigo is to the ryots actually a loss of labour and rent, and this we imagine Mr. Furlong will not deny. He says that the rate at which the produce is now taken from the ryots is four bundles for the rupee, whereas it used to be ten bundles. Now, in the first place, is Mr. Furlong quite sure that lately six bundles for the rupee were not taken at some of his factories ? And is he also aware that our bundles of the present measurement is fully equal to ten bundles of the old measurement ? But say that one rupee is given for four bundles, how does that remunerate the cultivators ? Taking one village with another on an average of ten years, a very fair average crop of indigo is ten bundles per beegah (this we have on the authority of planters of greater experience than Mr. Furlong), which would give the ryot 2-8, deduct price of seed 8 annas, and there is a balance of 2 rupees in the

hands of the cultivators to meet the rent of his land, the wages of his own labour, and the profit thereof !! Why, he must be an actual loser of hard cash. Next, as to this same rent, Mr. Furlong takes considerable unction to his soul for letting his lands to the ryots at three beegahs for the rupee. But the fact simply is, that Mr. Furlong does nothing of the sort ; the ryots are hereditary proprietors of the soil, and so long as they pay the land tax, which in that particular pergunnah is fixed at three beegahs per rupee, no one can touch them. Mr. Furlong could not raise their rent one pice if he wished it. We could go on pointing out other fallacies in Mr. Furlong's letter, but space and time press, and we have shown quite sufficiently for all purposes that his arguments are not to be depended upon. We do not attribute to him any intent to deceive, for we believe that, like many others of his class, he has by a long course of training taught himself to believe that the planters are the benefactors of their race. One fine day they will probably be rudely and roughly undeceived.—*Indian Field*, January 20, 1860.

MR. FURLONG.—Mr. Furlong on the present occasion commences by again quoting Rammohun Roy and Lord W. Bentinck's opinions in favour of the planters in 1829. As we said before, Rammohun Roy may be a very excellent man, and Lord W. Bentinck may be, as Mr. Furlong asserts, "the best and greatest Governor-General British India has hitherto enjoyed;" but they were neither of them at any time in a position to judge of the condition of the indigo districts, and certainly not of the condition of the cultivating classes of the present day.

Lord W. Bentinck's Minute, quoted by Mr. Furlong, was framed upon reports sent in by the Magistrates and Commissioners of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces. Now if Mr. Furlong will look at these reports, he will see that the Bengal reports were mostly unfavourable to the planters ; and from the North-Western Provinces—where the system is in no way the same as down here—the reports were favourable. Lord W. Bentinck struck a general average, and the Bengal planters got the benefit of the good character of the North-Western Province men ; and the planters of Hindoostan were most unjustly saddled with a portion of the evil

repute of the dye-makers of Bengal. Independently of this, however, the European manufacturers of indigo of those days, not being allowed to hold lands, and zemindars had not the same power of tyrannising that the zemindar-planter of the present day has, they were more at the mercy of the producers of the plant, and were obliged to treat them to a certain extent honestly and fairly. Add to this that each district had then only one Magistrate, who scarcely ever left his sudder station, instead of some six or seven Magistrates constantly on the move through their districts as at present ; and further take into consideration that many of these factories had belonged to the servants of Government, who were still even at that time more or less interested in the manufacture of the dye, and it is not difficult to understand how Lord W. Bentinck was induced to record a favourable opinion. Mr. Furlong asks if the system of advance and the relation of the ryots with the factory has been less liberal, or whether the Europeans employed in the indigo trade have become less honest than in those days. We do not hesitate in reply to say, that certainly the dealings of the planters have become far less liberal than they were : in those days advances were real money payments ; in the present day two-thirds of the advances are nominal and have no existence out of the planter's books ; they are mere paper advances, and even the wretched advance of Rs. 2 per beegah, in the exceptional instances in which it is really given, is not looked upon by either the donor or recipient as a fair trading advance, but as a sort of retainer, much as the barrel is put into the Commissariat boats—as shown in a late case at the Supreme Court—for the purpose of frightening the owner of the boat from running away after receiving cargo. The planter's advance is merely intended to frighten the ryot into the belief that, if after receiving it he does not grow indigo, he will be liable to punishment ; and till the last year the ryots have fully believed that the receipt of an advance did subject them to imprisonment if they did not grow what the planter wished them to grow. If the advance was looked upon by the cultivators as an assistance given by the planter to enable them to produce a crop, what occasion would there be for men like Mr. MacArthur to lock their ryots up and starve them until they took the advance ? Mr. Furlong knows as well as we do, that when a factory is in a tottering state, the planter gives a couple of rupees to any budmash who comes for it,

and is quite prepared to throw away some ten or twelve thousand rupees of his employer's capital in this manner, well knowing that the recipients of this so called advance have not an acre of land to their names, nor a plough or bullock in their possession. The money is not the planter's ; it belongs to some soft merchant or broker in Calcutta, who does not understand the factory system of double entry : the planter has a future to look to ; and to save his reputation, he squanders this money for the mere purpose of being able to inveigh against the dishonesty of the cultivators, the injustice of the Magistrate, and the looseness of the laws ; in short, to impute blame to every thing and every body but himself. This is the way in which the outstanding balances are made up, which figure so prominently in the Colonization Reports and the pamphlets of professional agitators.

Next, as to the degeneration of the Europeans employed in the trade, we readily admit they are more educated, more gentleman-like, and in every thing unconnected with the cultivation of indigo more upright and conscientious than some who preceded them ; but we cannot admit that they are more straightforward in their dealings with their weak neighbours. We are quite prepared to believe that there is not a planter's house in Nuddea into which " a clergyman or the most fastidious lady may not suddenly enter, and stay without seeing any thing or hearing one word that would be displeasing." Nay, we do not doubt that even a bishop might enter the dwelling-house of any planter, and hear nothing more unpleasant than a fantasia on the piano. We do not doubt that clergyman, lady, bishop, *Times'* correspondent, book-writer, or any other visitor, would receive the most hospitable, open-hearted reception that it is possible to conceive, and that under the influence of such hospitality they might be inclined really to believe their host's assertion that the ryots loved and adored him ; that the said host was a Lord Bountiful ; that the surrounding country, lately a desert or a forest, had been converted into a garden by the host's Anglo-Saxon energy and capital ; and by a little convenient grouping, the visitor might see the Lady Bountiful dispensing medicine to the Booneyah coolies, and chucking little Kowrahs affectionately under the chin. Such things have been done, Mr. Furlong ! But it is not with the dwelling-house that we have to do. Could the bishop,

clergyman, or fastidious lady go into the godown without seeing any thing displeasing? Could they go *incognito*, and hear my Lord Bountiful spoken of by the villagers one amongst the other? Could they go and see the land marked out for indigo? Could they see a ryot "taking his advance and signing his contract" without having their notions of the benefit indigo cultivation confers upon the people considerably modified? What does Mr. Furlong suppose would be their feelings on being told that a portion of the "fertile garden" was two short years ago a flourishing Brahmin village, which had been pulled down, and the site ploughed up because the residents thereof were supposed to use their influence in helping the ryots to resist the advances which the planter was forcing on them? What would they say if they went to the house of Seetul Turufdar, or any of the thousands of wretched beings like him in Bengal, who have been carried away forcibly by the planter's lattials, and never again heard of, their families left by the planter to starve but supported by the subscription of other ryots—fellow sufferers? Would Mr. Furlong call these "tales that he had heard of planters in days long gone by, which have rather surprised him? Does he not know that these things are to be seen and heard day by day within thirty miles of his own house? We had certainly believed Mr. Furlong to be a little more frank and honest; it is not enough that he should say these things do not happen in the concern of which he has charge: our assertion is that they are of daily occurrence in eighteen factories out of twenty in Bengal Proper. Our object is not to reform *James Furlong*, but the planting system, that system which, in spite of the substitution of *Maraschino* for *Gin*, of blue eyes for black, of bracelets for bangles, of the piano for the sitar, of the *Ratcatcher's Daughter* and *Villikins and his Dinah* for *hilly milly punneah* and *tazah be tazah*, has made the planter of the present day less of what is generally called an English gentleman than his predecessor of the last generation. The old style of planter knew that oppression was wrong; he felt that it could not be quite right for the strong to prey upon the weak: but the planter of the present day has grown up under a system which makes him really believe that tyranny is a necessary condition of the permanence of our rule, and that in taking the property of the black man he is doing him an honour and a benefit. Of the two we should prefer the disorderly

dwelling-house and the remnant of conscience, to the well-furnished mansion with its semi-detached prison house.

Now to return to Mr. Furlong's figures. He repeats his former assertion that the planter of the present day is more liberal than the planter of the past, because he only takes six bundles, whereas the man of the last generation took ten; but, as we said before, the four bundles of this day are quite equal to ten of the former bundles. With a refinement of cookery and furniture we have also a refinement of extortion. The old race of planter, if he had once made up his mind to robbery, used to steal in a straightforward sort of manner. The present planter takes full measure filled up and pressed down, and by a judicious arrangement of the small ends of the bundles and a lengthening of the measuring chain, squeezes ten bundles into five, and flatters himself that he is being very liberal. Next, Mr. Furlong says, that seed is supplied to the ryots at four annas per beegah, which is a mistake, for the ryot is more often charged eight annas, and in some concerns ten annas per beegah. Again, Mr. Furlong says, that the ryots could sow no other crops in spring except indigo and rice. He entirely ignores hemp, chillies, huldee, cutcho, sugar-cane, ginger, and several other crops of this sort, all of them most remunerative. Mr. Furlong apprehends that no one will endeavour to prove that rice is more remunerative than indigo. To this we can only reply that rice gives a clear profit of from Rs. 3 to 6 per beegah, whereas indigo, even if paid for, would give no profit at all, and as it never is paid for, is a loss of Rs. 2, exclusive of waste of land and trouble of growing and cutting. As to his assertion that no native would grow rice if it was not under the influence of poverty and his banker, we have no doubt he is correct. If a native could live and flourish without working, he very naturally would not work; but this feeling is not confined to ryots. If Mr. Furlong could live without a profession, it is very likely he would not be a planter, but he would think it rather unfair if Government was to make him distil rum for the troops without payment, on the ground that he was only a planter from necessity. A ryot may, perhaps, as Mr. Furlong says, buy rice more cheaply than he could grow it, but where is the money to come from

if he is not allowed the use of his land? If he was to trust to the profits of indigo growing for the supply of his rice, he would run a very poor chance of living for 24 hours. The next little inconsistency into which Mr. Furlong falls is by saying in one part of his letter that indigo cultivation has not increased for the last twenty-five years, yet that the cultivation of other crops has doubled; and that thirty years ago wherever he rode he witnessed scanty cultivation amid a wilderness of jungle where now all is likely a fertile garden: and this improvement in the face of the country he manages to attribute—by what process of reasoning it is difficult to conceive—to the indigo planters. If the indigo crop has remained stationary, it is because the planters cannot by all the means in their power get beyond a certain proportion of the land under that cultivation. The doubling of all crops except indigo is the strongest argument that Mr. Furlong could adduce against his own views of the question; it refutes his statement that no other crop will grow in Nuddea except indigo: it shows most convincingly that all other crops pay, and that indigo does not, for he can hardly hope to make the world believe that the planters would not extend the cultivation of indigo if they could do so, or that the ryots would not of their accord grow the crop if it paid them. The conversion of this wilderness into a garden is owing to the increased security of person and property, the exportation of rice and oil seeds, and the rise in the labour market, which has taken off the land the incubus of having to find employment for five times the number of cultivators that were necessary to prepare it for the crop. When there was no population living on wages, and no market, the ryots just kept enough land under cultivation to pay the mahajun and support a house full of lazy idlers: eight out of ten of these idlers are now employed as paid labourers, and the other two find that it is worth their while to produce a good crop to supply the wants of the paid labourers and meet the demand for export. When rice was selling at eight annas per maund, there was no encouragement to grow any great quantity of it; now that it fetches from Rs. 2 to 3, there is: and as all other crops except indigo have in like manner increased in value, the wilderness has become a garden in spite of the planters, who, as we have before shown, take one-fifth of the best soil for a crop which all admit does not pay the cultivator the expenses of growing it. Mr. Furlong

doubts whether the "most unscrupulous defamer of the planter" would say that rice was more remunerative than indigo. We need not refer to unscrupulous defamers to support our statement. If he will refer to the letters of the *Times'* correspondent when on his indigo tour, he will find a planter, Mr. Hampton, admitting to Mr. Wingrove Cooke over a social bottle of ginger-beer that indigo was not considered by the ryots so paying a crop as rice, but that the loss of the price of the crop was compensated for by the collateral advantages which the ryot gained of receiving his dozen stripes from the planter without trial, instead of having to go through the dilatory process of being tried before convicted, at a Magistrate's court 14 miles distant.

Mr. Furlong endeavours to shirk the question before us by arguing that even if the planters are tyrannical and unjust, the native zemindars are worse. Nobody ever said that the zemindars were not tyrannical, certainly not this journal; but that is not the question with which we are dealing. We should have thought it would stand to reason that an educated free-born Briton would be a kinder and more liberal person to have to deal with than a zemindar. Mr. Furlong, however, seems to think that this was not to be expected, and claims credit to his class that it is so. But any way, because the zemindars are bad, it does not follow that the planters are good. If a planter should ever have the misfortune to be tried for murder—a remote contingency, which we trust may not speedily be realised—it would, we apprehend, stand him in very little stead even before Sir M. Wells and a Calcutta Jury to plead that he was not liable to punishment for his crime, because he could quote an instance in which a more atrocious crime had been committed by a native. Mr. Furlong should confine himself to the question before the public—Are the planters a curse or a blessing to the country? Or, rather, he should devote his energies to proving that they are not a curse, for he would surely shrink from the labour of proving them a blessing now that he can no longer command the assistance of the great logomachist in proving that black is white. *Indian Field*, February 18, 1860.

INDIGO, SUGAR, AND SILK.—THE *Englishman*, who appears to be getting rather shy of unqualified denials of the truth of the charges so

universally brought against the Bengal planters, asks two questions in connection with this subject; the first is, why similar charges are not brought against the planters of Tirhoot, and secondly, why are not they brought against the sugar and silk factories, where the system of contract and advance are, he believes, precisely the same. To this we answer, the system is not the same; the planters of Tirhoot have until very lately been the most bitter denouncers of the system of Lower Bengal; they would not even employ an assistant in Tirhoot who had been brought up at a Bengal factory: cases are known in which assistants and managers have gone up to Tirhoot from Bengal, and been packed off about their business ten days after arrival.

The ryots of Behar would not stand the oppression that is patiently borne by the ryots of Bengal; a Hindoostanee bully would not by the assumption of any amount of "Yaghee" swagger alarm the villagers of Behar, whereas a man has only to curl his moustachios, tie a cloth round his chin, and put on a swagger to frighten the Bengalee cultivators out of their wits. The Tirhoot planters not being surrounded by such weak neighbours have been taught to respect the rights of others, and the consequence is, that none but respectable men who have made up their minds to fair dealing have ventured into Tirhoot. During the last few months, however, a few European adventurers, taking advantage of the cowed state of the people under the late reign of Terror, have endeavoured to introduce the Bengal system, and we do hear complaints from that quarter of ryots being made to sow forcibly a crop of indigo against their will. Mr. Solano's name is not altogether unknown to the public; but take them all in all, the planters of Tirhoot are a very superior race to the planters of Lower Bengal.

Next, as to the silk factors, their system of contract is in no way similar to that of the indigo planters; they are generally not zemindars: they give advances to pykars or middlemen, who act as their agents, go about from village to village and purchase cocoons, not at a rate fixed by the purchaser and enforced *vi et armis*, but at the market rate; the price being settled by demand and supply, and not by the shoe or the godown. If the planters would do the same, if they would leave the

indigo to find its natural price, the cultivation of that crop would soon become so remunerative that they would have more plant at their disposal than they would well know what to do with. The profits on each individual maund would be less, but the gross profits would be greater, the consciences of the planters easier, and the respect which the natives of the country would entertain for Englishmen and Christians more profound. This, however, the planters will not see; they argue that they are the zemindars and the conquering race, and it is very hard if they may not fix the price of a crop produced on the soil, the land tax of which they farm. We never, however, heard them argue that they had a right as zemindars to fix the price of tobacco and cereals, but this is, perhaps, because they do not deal in these commodities.

The only disgraceful disputes that occur in connection with silk are where Messrs. L. and Co.,—for instance,—of Moorshedabad, send off pykars with large advances to Malda or elsewhere to buy cocoons, and where these pykars, when bringing down boat-loads of these cocoons to their employers, are attacked by, say Messrs. J. and R. W.'s hired bravoos, and plundered of all they have purchased. Of course the *Englishman* thinks the pykars and the police are to blame for little accidents of this sort, and not the European gentlemen who organise the highway robbery; and perhaps he is right, for what right have the pykars to tempt men so little capable of withstanding temptation as Messrs. J. and R. W.? and what right have we to a police at all, or any other emblem of civilization in a country where there is one law for the strong and white and another for the weak and black?

It must also be remembered that the planter through his immunity from punishment is tempted, in cases where he chooses to say a native has failed in a contract with him, to constitute himself judge, jury, advocate, sheriff, bailiff, and clerk of the crown, in his own cause, and to give a verdict with heavy damages in his own favour, and to execute judgment by ploughing up and sowing the lands of the weaker, high-contracting party with his indigo. The silk factor cannot do this; he can make a ryot grow mulberry; but he would find it somewhat difficult, great man as he may be, to make the worms hatch or spin; he therefore thinks

it more to his interest to pay a fair price, and make it the interest of the ryot to look after his worms.

The sugar factor does not follow a system in any way resembling that of the planter ; he goes into the market, and sends his agents round to all the weekly sugar fairs in the neighbourhood; and buys up the sugar in competition with all the world at the price of the day. If he gives advances, it is to men who act as his agents. It is thus clear that the silk and sugar dealers do not come into collision with the ryots as the planters do ; the connection between the former and the people is that of buyer and seller, the connection between the planter and the ryots is that of master and slave,—hence the charges brought against the dye-maker and the popularity of the sugar-boiler.—*Indian Field*, February 25, 1860.

PLANTER ZEMINDARS IN NUDDEA.—WE have received a Bengalee letter from the ryots of Boyerbanda, Khaspoor, and Koolgachie, in the district of Nuddea, with a request that we should translate it into English and publish it in this journal. We would have gladly acceded to this request, but for the length of the communication, and sundry superfluities contained in it. We, however, give our readers the substance of the letter.

The writers commence with stating that they lived happily in their villages under their zemindars, the Rajpoot Roys of Nakassiparah, until the Bengalee year 1259, when family dissensions occurring among the Roy baboos, some of the sharers leased out their portions of the property to an indigo planter for the term of ten years. Up to that period, say the writers, they were pursuing their respective avocations unmolested, and were advancing in wealth and comfort ; but since the time portions of the property passed into the hands of the indigo planter they have not had a day of ease or happiness, and are gradually falling into poverty and distress. They thus recount their grievances :—They are compelled to take advances for the cultivation of indigo ; good lands which have been carefully prepared for the reception of rice seed are immediately “ marked ” for indigo ; so long as labour is needed for sowing and cleaning

indigo lands, no one is permitted to work for his own purposes ; when the indigo crop is ready, the ryots are made to gather it and store it in the factory godowns, but are allowed no remuneration for their labours ; not only is no remuneration received, but the factory servants have to be bribed in order to avoid ill-treatment ; resistance to oppression is punished with imprisonment in the factory cells, fines, burning of homes, &c. ; redress is not to be had from the courts, the presiding officers of which are on friendly terms with the planters ; the police officers stand in awe of the planters, whose influence over the magistrate they see and dread : many a good darogah has lost his situation in consequence of opposing the planters ; there is no law, no protection for the ryots.

It is the old tale. The public have been surfeited with accounts like these. The stereotyped form of oppression is reproduced in every village where a factory is established or which is annexed to a factory's demesnes. The plant, it has been proved over and over, cannot be grown with free labour unless at more honest rates, and these latter will not be paid. Its cultivation seriously interferes with agricultural operations generally, and that interference is pushed on by brute force. The Magistrate loves society and good cheer, or fears the Planters' Association and newspapers, and refers the oppressed ryot to the arbitration of the planter's friends. The planter's amlah draw those perquisites which under another system of misrule would be due to the police amlah.

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We again refrain from imputing the blame of all this to the planters, and charge it to the official but unfaithful protectors of the people. The former find it at once profitable and safe to be dishonest and wicked ; and average human nature, in search of a fortune, cannot, under such temptations, be long expected to remain honest and of good principles. The planters must pay high rents and high interest, and live high too, it seems. This cannot be done by paying fair wages for labour or fair prices for produce. They must oppress, or be content with the ordinary profits of agriculture. If they have selected the former alternative, they have done what nine-tenths of mankind under similar circumstances would do. But it is to prevent men from selecting that alternative that laws are made and governments exist. Had the oppression spoken of

in connection with indigo planting been confined to solitary places on the outskirts of some remote district, or been committed at exceptional times, the law and its ministers might have pleaded the imperfections of all human institutions or the infirmities of human nature. But such is not the case here. Oppression of the most odious kind is systematic with indigo planters. It is practised under the very eye of Government. It is tolerated, where not encouraged, by the magistracy. It is fostered and kept up in full vigour by the legislature. It remains to be seen how long more the conspiracy will last.

The writers of the letter before us next proceed to describe their condition as the ryots of a planter-landholder. They have sent us an account of the increase of rents and the new cesses imposed on them. The three villages formerly used to pay to the owners of the shares leased out to the planters Rs. 1,175-4 per annum. They paid to the planter-*ezardar* last year Rs. 2,225-10.

The latter sum is composed as follows :—

Rent, as formerly paid to the zemindars 1,175 4

Additional cesses levied by the ezardar :

Ezardar's profit proper 148 14

Batta on coin 18 6

Gomashta's comforts 10 0

Making up original deficiencies in the
assessment of rent 102 0

Making up for short measurement, in other
words, a cess paid in deprecation of fre-
quent and vexatious measurements 146 0

Fines on pycusth holdings 15 2

Commutation of fines for cattle trespass 143 0

Amlah charges 119 0

Festival and adjusting-accounts' fees 99 0

Canal binding and water rates 27 0

Commutation of fines for dust created by
cattle passing over roads 25 0

Carried over 853 6 1,175

Brought forward	...	...	853	6	1,175	4
The factory gomashtha's fees	...	...	47	0		
Ezardar's amlah establishment	...	...	150	0		
Total	...	...	...	...	1,050	6
Grand Total	...	...	...	...	2,225	10

We fear we have not been able to render into intelligible English the technical Bengalee terms by which the several abwabs or cesses above noted are described. Our inexperienced readers might possibly be led, by the terms we have used, to believe that each item has its appropriate use. No such thing. The "batta on coin paid," no ryot's rupee that has lost a grain will be received by the gomashtha except at its bullion value. The "gomashtha's comforts" paid, still the gomashtha, when he favours the village with a visit, must have his wants, from fish to tobacco, duly supplied by the villagers. The fines for cattle trespass commuted, still each stray cow will be impounded. The theory is this:—The ezardar incurs these charges, suffers these losses, and acquires certain means of annoyance. They are all purchased off at such and such settled payments. But these payments are immediately by custom converted into permanent revenue. The commutation purchases off the conventional right of the ezardar to exercise his powers of extortion and annoyance, but that is no reason that the amlah should be estopped of their claims or the law defrauded of its dues.

We congratulate the ryots of Boyerbanda, Khaspoor, and Koolgachie on their exemption, as their own representations show, from such imposts as the *lattee-salamee*, or pecuniary homage due on the appearance of the club-armed paik before he lays down his club, or the *komor-holamee*, that is due on his ungirding his waist-cloth, the—the list is sickening, though it may be easily made up in but many parts of Her Majesty's dominions in Lower Bengal.

The letter proceeds on to say:—"There is chur land on the bank of the Khurree River, running past our villages. This land is sown with

indigo. It is about 350 beegahs. But for the cultivation of this large area, the saheb-ezardar keeps not one ox, one plough, or one labourer. On the day preceding that on which cultivation will commence on the chur, a khalasee from the factory comes to the villages with a drum, and proclaims with the beat of it, that to-morrow morning the cultivation of the saheb's *neezabad* of the chur will commence; every ryot is expected on the ground early to-morrow morning with his oxen, his ploughs, and his labourers, and to be there day by day until the land is cultivated; should any one disobey, he will have ten strokes of a shoe and be fined ten rupees. This is not an idle threat, but is carried rigidly into execution. Thus a chur, the cultivation of which would cost nearly four hundred rupees, is cultivated without the expenditure of a pice."

Ryots in indigo villages are, as our readers are aware, oftener driven to combinations than ryots elsewhere. Attempts have been made in these very columns to liken these combinations formed by ryots for the purpose of opposing a zemindar or an indigo planter to the strikes of labouring men in Great Britain. The comparison is fallacious. Whilst the artisan who famishes in a strike displays some of the noblest qualities of human nature, and returns to his work a better man than when he left it, the ryot in a combination is driven to the lowest arts of chicanery and deceit, and when he fails is left completely at the mercy of his powerful opponent. Combinations do him no good.

We have given the above unvarnished tale as it has been told to us. Its truth is apparent on the face of it. There is an amount of suffering, misery, and degradation in our indigo-planting districts that is perfectly incompatible with the notion that organized Government exists in the country. It has shocked us. How long will it be said that its recitation falls flat upon the official soul?—*Hindoo Patriot*, December 24, 1859.

THE INDIGO SYSTEM.—THE indigo question is approaching to a solution. We propose to give a sober description of the whole system of indigo cultivation, as we think it would lead to a better understanding of that question. The agrarian rising in the indigo districts is the result of

a strong and irresistible desire to break off all connection with this system. We do not for the world wish the commission that is to be appointed to prejudge the case that will be laid before them, but we simply wish to contribute our quota of information. We fear it is a hopeless task to rouse the sympathies of the English public here in favour of the oppressed and impoverished ryots, but we do hope to see the day when the sympathies of the British public will be enlisted on behalf of that class.

A ryot possessing one plough and two bullocks is required by every indigo planter to sow four beegahs of land with indigo, the outlay and return for which are as follows :—

The cultivator gets in advance Rupees 8, of which Rupees 3 he has to pay to the planter's dewan, tagidgeers, and ameens, leaving Rupees 5 only to himself.

The ploughing, weeding, and other necessary expenses, including rent for 4 beegahs of land, come to not less than Rupees 40. The average produce is 64 bundles, of which almost one-half is taken on dustoory and other accounts ; for the remaining half of the produce, the cultivator gets credit in the planter's books at the rate of six bundles a Rupee, or a little more than Rupees 5 for the whole lot. This sum being deducted from the advance, there remains a balance of Rupees 3 against the cultivator after he has paid Rupees 35 to meet the cost of cultivation. For this balance, Rupees 3, he is charged interest at the rate of Rupees 37-8 per cent. per annum, or six pie per Rupee per month. At the next indigo sowing season, the balance, Rupees 3, above referred to, together with the interest accruing therefrom, is debited to the cultivator's account as advanced to him to carry on the indigo cultivation again in that season, at the close of which his debt to the planter becomes more than treble of what it was at the end of the first season. Again, his expenditure in the second season is Rupees 40, or Rupees 5 more than that of the first season. In the third season the debt increases, and it continues increasing every succeeding season. Thus the indigo cultivator remains the indigo planter's or rather manufacturer's debtor for ever, and also his children, grand-children, and great-grand-children, to whom he leaves this legacy of irretreivable debt. The

forcible cultivation of indigo is the ground-work of the system we are describing. The records of the Foudary Adawluts of Rajshahye, Kishnaghur, Jessore, and Pubna will conclusively show this to be the fact. For the special edification of those who deny that indigo is forcibly sown, we publish the following correspondence, the case disclosed in it being one of frequent occurrence :—

No. 17.

To

W. DAMPIER, ESQUIRE,

Superintendent of Police, L. P.

Camp Lahore, 14th February, 1852.

SIR,

HAVING received private information of an intended affray between the people of Mr. J. C. Abbott and those of Monmohun Sandial at Nulbatta, within the limits of Thannah Nattore, I proceeded to the spot yesterday, and found the former had just forcibly sown indigo on the lands in that and other villages belonging to the latter zemindar. I observed several fields previously cultivated with ammun, chena, and khasarees by the ryots had been hastily and lightly ploughed up and sown with indigo seeds. I saw that two houses had been burnt down, and was told that they had been set fire to by the dewan of the Shampore Factory. There had been a large and tumultuous assemblage of Mr. Abbott's people. Making every allowance for the looseness and exaggeration with which numerical statements are made by the villagers, there could not have been less than 500 men. All the ploughmen, peons, tagidgeers, ameens, and gomash tas of the Shampore, Nundkoojah, Beaghaut, and other factories, headed by a Mr. J. Vailliant, Mr. Abbott's assistant, and armed with lattees, swords, spears, and pikes had collected at Nulbatta at night, and having drawn the whole village—men, women, and children—from home, commenced, under the cloak of darkness, destroying the paddy and other produce of their fields and sowing indigo. While they were thus employed, one of the jemadars of this thannah stationed at a neighbouring village was attracted to the spot by the noise : he was, however, abused, and so severely beaten, that he was carried back to his place in a state of insensibility. They continued sowing field

after field till morning, when about (80) eighty of them were apprehended by my police with their weapons. I have the satisfaction to report also that Mr. Vaillient and Kistolall Bagchee, who appear to have taken the lead in this outrage, have both surrendered themselves, and have been admitted on bail.

2nd.—From the local enquiries instituted by me, and the evidence of the villagers for several miles around, it appears to have been a case of gross oppression. That the armed and tumultuous assemblage of the factory people should not have been attended with any disastrous results, was not their fault, but was owing to the timidity or forbearance of the ryots oppressed. If these had attempted to resist the forcible cultivation of indigo in their jotes, loss of life and limb would have been the inevitable consequence.

3rd.—Mr. Vaillient, though he calls himself a Frenchman, is, I believe, an East Indian, or a Pondicherry Frenchman. But even if he were an European Frenchman, he would, as a foreigner, be equally amenable to the Mofussil Criminal Courts with the natives. The charge brought home against him and other parties implicated in this case as principals are forcing the cultivation of indigo for the Shampore Factory on the lands of villages owned by Monmohun Sandial, illegal assembling of armed men, oppressing the ryots, and assaulting and resisting the police jemadar in the execution of his duty. The evidence against them in regard to arson does not appear to me to be conclusive. Under these circumstances, I conceive that the case, though fortunately unattended by severe wounding or other aggravating circumstances, yet is sufficiently serious to warrant its commitment to the Sessions Court. I am at least not altogether satisfied as to my competence to dispose of it finally, and shall be therefore much obliged by your kindly favouring me with your advice whether it would be proper and expedient for me to commit or punish. My investigation is completed and the case is nearly ready, and conceiving that the ends of justice would be best promoted by its prompt and speedy decision, I have taken the liberty to make this reference to you direct, in order to avoid all unnecessary delay.

4th.—In conclusion, I have the honour to report that I have stationed two police jemadars at the spot, and have instituted a case under Act IV. of 1840, in regard to the lands in dispute between Mr. Abbott and Monmohun Sandial, in order to determine and settle the question of possession.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) KISSORY CHAND MITTRA,
Deputy Magistrate.

No. 345.

To

BABOO KISSORY CHAND MITTRA,
*Deputy Magistrate, Nattore,
Camp Dehree, on the Grand Trunk Road,
Dated the 22nd February, 1852.*

SIR,

IN reply to your letter, No. 17 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to acquaint you, that as the riot therein reported, although most unjustifiable and oppressive, was not attended with any serious consequences, and the evidence as to the arson is not conclusive against the parties, you had, I think, better dispose of the case yourself.

2nd.—You should sentence the principals to the highest punishment within your competency to award, and pass orders on the minor agents according to their share in the offence.

3rd.—Mr. Vailliant is subject to the local jurisdiction.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. DAMPIER,
Supdt. of Police, L. P.

The parties were convicted and sentenced to be imprisoned for six months, with labour, commutable to a fine, and to pay a fine of Rupees 200 each, in default to be imprisoned for an additional period.

When a ryot is reduced to the lowest ebb of poverty by reason of suffering such heavy losses from his connection with the concern, and is altogether out of means to continue the culture of this vegetable dye, he is made to work as a cooly in the factory. In this capacity he is compelled to work off the fictitious arrears.

Just as the season for sowing indigo comes on, the planter's ameens go about the fields and point out to the ryots for indigo cultivation such lands as they find well prepared. These lands, intended for the culture of rice and other profitable crops, are converted into neel khets ; the ryots are forced to sow indigo against their will. The ryots' troubles do not end here. During the sowing season they are not allowed to look after any other crops, however profitable, and which always fail totally or partially, in consequence of any timely attention not being paid to them. Their whole time and energies are demanded by the neel, and are absorbed in its culture. Woe to the Paramanic or Mundul or Sheikh who neglects it for other crops !

Lands sown with indigo at the close of the rains require some shade for the protection of the young plants from the scorching effects of the sun ; the unlucky cultivators are forced to sow linseed and other dry-weather crops in them for covering them up. If in the following January there is a copious fall of rain, the shade from the linseed and other plants is unfavourable to the development of the indigo crop ; and under such circumstances the ryots are compelled again to destroy those extra crops. But in the event of there being no rain in January, or little earlier, the extra crops are allowed to arrive at maturity. The produce from them is, however, as a rule, appropriated by the planter's amlahs as the *huc* of the kuttee. The ryot is not, by the planting law, entitled to the least portion of it. These extra crops, instead of being of any use to the ryot, rather serve to add in a great measure to his trouble and expense.

The planters also carry on the cultivation of indigo on their own account to a certain extent, as the neej-jotes in the indigo districts would show. The expense the planter is put to on this head is a trifle.

The workmen residing in the indigo districts are forced to supply labour to the planter's khas cultivation. The price paid for such labour is one rupee for cultivating one beegah of land, which, according to Government measurement, is nearly a beegah and-a-half. Out of this rupee, six annas is deducted by way of dustoory by the planter's amlahs, leaving ten annas only as a remuneration for the labourer, whereas three times that sum would be very moderate wages for him. The planter's extra workman is, however, more fortunate than his *dadoonee ashamee*: the more he pays for the indigo crop, the more largely he becomes indebted to the planters.

Whenever any ryot has the ill-luck to incur the saheb's displeasure, he is oppressed most terribly; his house is often burnt, and his property looted by the factory lattyals. The Mofussil Courts, constituted as they are, do not always afford any protection to the helpless peasants against such outrages, and are often converted into instruments for oppression. Does he refuse to receive advances, old claims against him are raked up from the khata books. Does he refuse to sow his paddy khets with indigo old balances are conjured up against him?

The indigo planters somehow manage to become talookdars and izar-dars, as without such territorial influence, they cannot carry on their planting business as successfully as they could wish. This unquestionably establishes his prestige, and enables him to lord it in the Mofussil. It places the destinies of the agricultural population completely at their disposal. Suffice it to say, that a large portion of what the ryots earn is appropriated by their planting lords, leaving to them a very small portion of their income only to enable them to sustain life. In fact, their condition is in point of fact even worse than that of the American slaves.

The khoodkhast and other ryots who do not follow the agricultural profession—the kamars and the koomars—the mistries and the moodies—the mahajuns and the manufacturers—are not exempted from the taxes levied by the neel-kotee. Some way or other they are compelled to pay a certain portion of their income to their planting landlord and his greedy

amlaha. Persons daring to object to such payment must make up their minds to a residence in the planter's godowns

Lattialism is an important element of the indigo system, and is a normal institution in the indigo districts.

Lattials ranging from two to three hundred are engaged almost in every factory with the view of enabling the planter to enforce his hookum. These lattials are not kept all in one place, but are divided into several small bands, and are located in different out-factories within the jurisdiction of the Concern. When any village gives any cause of dissatisfaction to the planter, it is given up to the lattials; they are despatched from different stations to the scene of operation; they plunder the village, and maltreat the offending ryots, and then disperse themselves in different directions

Such is the indigo system. It is fraught with grievous oppression, and as the Lieutenant-Governor says, is "full of abuses." It is, to quote the same high authority, completely "rotten," and its "rotteness consists in this, that in practice the ryot is made to act like a slave, not like a free man." Yes! it renders the position of the indigo cultivator one of unmitigated hardship, and it forces him to cultivate indigo by illegitimate coercion. It is to avoid such hardship that the ryots now refuse to receive advances or cultivate indigo. It is to escape such coercion that the most peaceful, industrious, and loyal population in all India are now almost in rebellion.—*Indian Field*, March 31, 1860.

INDIGO AND ANARCHY.

ANARCHY IN BENGAL.—They speak what is literally a truth who speak of the prevalence of anarchy in some of the districts of Bengal. It is anarchy when a few men, by the mere force of the strong arm lord it over millions, and bar them from the benefits of government. The external show of courts, policemen, and officials, is a mockery

in regions where the oppressed man cannot approach the law but by permission of his oppressor. It is anarchy there where lattialiam is an institution for the maintenance of which its patrons openly contend with the legislature—where the iron will, the brave heart, and brute force will ensure their possessor complete supremacy.

And why should it be so? These districts, the seat of this anarchy, are within eyesight of a government the strongest in Asia. The people are a race who require the least amount of government to keep their society together. It is a country of old traditions, which has known regular laws and courts of justice for nearly a century. One single tax of four millions is borne by the people themselves to the public exchequer with a punctuality not observed by the seasons. Religion reigns in the land with more than ordinary force. And yet there is anarchy in Bengal.

The phenomenon is easily explicable. No branch of the internal administration of Bengal is so inefficient as the police and penal judicature. The ordinary magistracy has always been found incapable of coping with crimes of any magnitude. Whenever a form of great crime has to be put down, a special organization becomes needed. Weak in numerical strength, the magistracy is weaker in action. The discreditably low aim which the District Magistrates propose to themselves is pursued with a total lack of energy and vigour. The District Magistrate is satisfied if his superiors do not report him worse than his predecessor. He is more than satisfied if he keeps his district in no worse order than it was when he stepped into his office. The hard task of maintaining the very existence of peace is postponed to the less exacting duty of superintending roads and ferries, and tampering with the prospects of subordinates. Wanting confidence in himself, and perhaps in his official superiors too, he dares not grapple with the larger evils, or provoke the enmity of a powerful wrong-doer. The sufferings of a black man can never be an object of anything but occasional pity to a true son of Japhet. But the white Magistrate placed over a population of black men is so habituated to sights of suffering and oppression, that they do not excite in his breast even that fashionable little sentiment. Genuine callousness of heart

would pass for judicial impartiality, and indolence shelters itself under the guise of a constitutional respect for the law.

But the Magistrate, though the chief custodian of the peace in his own district, is after all, it may be said, a responsible officer. He is but a subordinate in a hierarchy of many grades. There is his diocesan, the Commissioner of the Division. What does he do? It is his duty to see that the Magistrate performs his duty. To that end he moves from station to station, the doing which he calls his tour of inspection. Inspect he often does, as the shelves of the fouzdaaree record room and the roads of the cutcherry compound at seasons abundantly testify. Controul the Magistrate he does; or why does every darogah, mohurrir, jemadar, or burkundauz, who has been fined, suspended, or dismissed, feel that he does himself injustice until he has appealed to the Commissioner? No Commissioner of Division, however, feels it necessary to enquire into the state of the more vital matters affecting the well-being of his district. It is no business of his to goad the indolent, instruct the inexperienced, or to check the aberrations of the corrupt. With his subordinates he shares the sweet calm of a disposition not to be ruffled by sights of suffering and oppression.

The Commissioner again is but a suffragan. There is his metropolitan, the Government of Bengal. The Government of Bengal was a few years ago composed of the leisure moments of a statesman whose proper duties occupied him twelve hours a day, and of the weaknesses of a secretary who would be outcasted if he wrote a strong letter of censure of his own accord. Since the conversion of the Government of Bengal into an entity, it has indeed made itself individually felt. The first incarnate Government of Bengal was a man whose knowledge of the country was unbounded. High hopes were entertained of him. His first act raised those hopes higher than ever. He recorded his opinion in sententious terms, that everywhere the Strong oppressed the Weak. The opinion—a truism—had all the charms of a discovery when it proceeded from Mr. Halliday's mouth; for it was universally believed that the truism was soon to be converted, in a great measure at least, into a myth in the dominions of the Government

of Bengal. People expectantly waited for the remedy. That was soon proposed. It was to destroy the Strong—to leave none but the Weak. The strong proved too strong for the destroyer. It was not the idiosyncrasy of the vigorous minute-writer to take action after the publication of his minute. The Strong everywhere continued to oppress the Weak.

With one branch of the Strong family the first Government of Bengal cultivated relation which affected the condition of the Weak very materially. The first Government of Bengal was considerable in advance of the rest of mankind in his views of policy; and the development of the resources of the country was an extremely favoured object of his political sympathies. Therefore, and for another reason, namely, that the said Government was very pardonably ambitious of a British fame, he patronized with all his might the branch of the Strong family which made indigo and coal. He knew how indigo and coal were made. But he tolerated all, and discouraged every attempt of every body that interfered with the production of indigo and coal.

Mr. Halliday's successor has been but a few months in the office. That he has already grown so popular is as much due to the fact of his being Mr. Halliday's successor as to the unqualified respect entertained for his character, and the boundless confidence felt in his impartiality and love of justice. This last is an advantage which will stand him in good stead whenever his acts offend a class or injure a pampered interest. He has already taken the first step towards the restoration of law and order in the seats of anarchy. There is no doubt that it will not be the last. But we doubt whether even Mr. Grant will be able to cow his subordinates to co-operate with him in the great task. They are not accustomed to believe that anarchy needs to be removed, whilst the "station" is safe and the revenues are paid in. They have no idea that the anarchy can be removed, or any good will come out of anything being substituted for it. They object to the novelty and the troublesomeness of the task sought to be imposed upon them. Some of quicker instincts see political danger in the entire suppression of anarchy in the land. Others believe that the development of the resources will cease. All will vote Mr. Grant a bore.

The question has become a serious one. The ryots, if they have not learnt that Mr. Grant has forbidden the cultivation of indigo, have learnt that Mr. Halliday is no longer Governor. Mr. Tottenham's magistracy of a few weeks has given them the idea that justice is not always unattainable. A spirit, such as we never in our weakest moments anticipated, has made its appearance in the indigo-growing districts. The poor fellows may in the end succumb. But between the date and this there will occur a series of social collisions which will simply disgrace established authority. We supplicate our rulers to ward off these occurrences.—*Hindoo Patriot, February 4, 1860.*

THE silly affectation of incredulity with which some parties receive our statements of disorder and lawlessness in the interior of Bengal might have been safely despised if it did not afford protection to a set of powerful wrong-doers from the chastening operation of social opinion. Whenever some act of flagrant oppression or daring outrage is related, a chorus of voices sing out, in a tone of indignant scepticism—"Can it be?" "Ought it to be believed?" Society feels it due to itself to conceal the existence of evils which in the long run are not less injurious to it than to the pariahs who are the immediate sufferers. The delicate nerves of virtuous men are shocked to be told of atrocities with the details of which they are as well acquainted as the victimized themselves. Conventionally, it is a thorough and strict understanding that the eye shall not see nor the ears hear what the hand doeth. This sort of conventionalism, we admit, has its uses when applied to certain affairs of life. It will scarcely benefit anybody if the *Times* regularly reported every tittle of evidence given in at trials for divorces, or devoted three leaders a week to the discussion of their features. Some evils are best repressed by being ignored. It is condemned in books of a certain character, that they corrupt public morals by familiarising the public mind with the details of horror and indecency. Such books are enticing reading in spite of their dangerous character. The immediate pleasure is preferred to the shunning of the distant and intangible evil. But the evil to which we are endeavouring to draw attention is altogether of a different kind. The

light of public opinion cannot shine on it without blanching it. There is no temperament so morbid that will be reconciled to absolute lawlessness for the pleasure of witnessing outrages. The conduct of those, therefore, who knowing what is now passing in the interior of Bengal seek to suppress all mention of it, cannot be too strongly condemned.

There is scarcely one of the daily journals in Calcutta which would publish such a letter as the Revd. Mr. Bomwetsch has addressed to the *Indian Field*, which is contained in last week's issue of that paper. Yet how necessary is it to the very existence of society that such things as Mr. Bomwetsch relates should be exposed, thoroughly exposed ! To us whose painful task it has been for the last five months to hear the stories of hundreds of ryots, refugees, and suppliants for justice, from the Nuddea district, the letter conveys nothing new. But the majority of our readers will obtain some definite idea of the sort of anarchy which prevails in that part of the country when they learn from Mr. Bomwetsch that :

"Some hundreds of lattials and spearsmen are at this moment assembled to loot the villages of Pathorghata, Gobindopore, and Maliaputta or Chandrabash, because the ryots still refuse to take advances, or to enter into contract with the planter, lest they should have him say they had not kept the contract. Many villages petitioned the Magistrate again, implored the Commissioner over and over again, humbly beseeched even the Governor himself, to grant them protection from the persecutions of the planters; but instead of obtaining any remedy, have afresh been mercilessly delivered into the hands of their oppressors. Since the above was written, I have received a letter from Kishnaghur, the civil station, informing me that ryots had come into the station, having their whole substance, plough, &c., packed on carts, "to seek for protection," and remained near the cutcherry for days without any redress. How they have left these quarters, and what has been done on their behalf is not known. The ryots are more than ever impressed with the idea that the confederacy between Planters and Magistrates (both Covenanted and Uncovenanted) was an inseparable one."

Another witness, Mr. Lincke, of Bullubhpore, says :

"The people in the threatened villages are sore afraid, and those who can have their wives, children, and cattle sent away to other places. Those persons who remain cannot get out of their villages for fear of being caught and carried off. To several of them it has happened so. Several of the villages have given in, and I believe only two or three in this neighbourhood are still holding out, and these are the villages which are threatened with being looted. I wonder how it will end. I am afraid all will return to *as it was before*. Nothing good for the people will result."

Mr. Bomwetsch continues—

"Two lads of 18 and 19 years, pupils of our Training Institution, were expressly sent to my tent in order to tell me what they had seen and heard themselves, as they have only just now returned from their vacation, which they spent at Bullubhpore. They say those quarters look quite warlike. The contemplated loot had not yet taken place, because the planter's lattials were sore afraid of the villagers, who were determined to give them fierce battle. They had divided themselves into at least six different companies. One company consists merely of bowsmen. Another of slingsmen, like David of old. Another company consists of brick-wallas, for which purpose they have even, as I hear, collected the scattered bricks about my old compound. Another company consists of bale-wallas. Their business is merely to send the hard, unripe bale-fruit at the heads of the planter's lattials. Again, another division consists of thal-wallas, who fling their brass rice-plates in a horizontal way at the enemy, which does great execution. Again, another division consists of rôlâ-wallas, who receive the enemy with whole and broken well-burned earthen pots. The Bengal women do at times great execution with this weapon. One afternoon the planter's lattials fled in confusion, when they saw the Solo women march out thus armed. Again, another division have to play the latty. And the fiercest division is the company of judhisteer, as they call it, who are the so-called shorki-wallas or spearmen. This company consists only of twelve men

but considering that at one time one good marksman, who had the spears reached to him by others, chased one hundred lattials, their number, though numerically small, is still formidable. And these are the men that the lattials fear most, and, frightened by them, they have not yet ventured on an attack."

And this sort of anarchy has been reigning for weeks together, without, as it would seem, the slightest effort on the part of the authorities to suppress it. Perhaps it is as well that the authorities should not stir, but leave the villagers to fight in defence of their lives and homes. For, it is just possible that the interference of the authorities, if directed at all, would be directed against the ryots, who may be taken up for rioting and committing breaches of the peace—a way of doing business not uncommon with Magistrates in indigo districts. It is, however, simply disgraceful to all who have it in charge to protect the peace, that the state of things described by Mr. Bomwetsch should continue so long. In no other part of the civilized world would it be tolerated that villages should remain besieged by hired bravos, for days and weeks, while the Magistrate is quietly sitting, hearing reports and punishing police officers for neglecting forms and furnishing insufficient supplies.

Has the Government nothing to propose in order to put down this state of things, but affray bills and disarming acts? Are the existing laws so wholly insufficient to meet the evil as to justify the inaction which fosters it? Has the experiment been tried of using these laws with ordinary vigour, and has it failed? Let the enquiry be at once made, and a blot on the administration, admitted to be disgraceful, be forthwith removed.—*Hindu Patriot, February 11, 1860.*

THE MAGISTRACY.—The numerical weakness of the magistracy in Bengal has often been adduced in palliation of the grave shortcomings of that most responsible body of officials. They are, it is said, too few and far between. But is that a valid and sufficient plea? We believe not. For with the strong prestige, organisation, and machinery of the British Government, nothing is easier than to keep the peace of a district, if the

authority entrusted with the business will only do it properly. Nor is it fair to charge the deficiency to the incapacity or corruption of the lower agents. The hands, though the immediate instruments of action, are still subservient to the head that wills and directs. Yea more. In the language of the proverb, he who knows the game of cowries will be able to play it even if the cowries be bad. It is nothing but idle to lay the fault on the weakness of the Police force, when a Magistrate is not successful in keeping his district in order. A thousand times numerically stronger force will scarcely benefit the country if the magisterial duties are performed in that slovenly and inefficient manner in which the planting districts have for the last few years been ruled. The defect does not lie in the canker with which the Police is said to be affected, as with the Magistrate who cannot doctor it effectually. The Police is in every respect under the complete controul of the Magistrate, and it only requires a little exertion on the part of the latter to make it as efficient as even the most sanguine might wish. But as the tail follows the body, so will the Police suit itself to the inclination and tendencies of its chief. The thing is after all evident that if a Magistrate wishes that his subordinates should be useful to the public, nothing can be easier than for him to make them so. Police officers are as regardful of their own interests as any other class of officers, and there will scarcely be wanting on their part an inclination to act honestly and energetically when they find that nothing less will satisfy their superiors and better their prospects. But they are at the same time shrewd enough to understand the disposition or, as it is more aptly expressed in the vernacular by the word *mijaz*, of the controlling Saheb, and will accordingly not fail to put themselves in the posture the Saheb would have them assume. If the Saheb loves ease, the darogah will hardly put himself to any trouble for the public weal. If the Saheb be indolent, his subordinates will seek their ease, and such among them as are disposed to it, will stir to make a little money if they can find means to do it. We think no efficient Magistrate ever complained of the insufficiency and want of sharpness in the instruments with which he had to work. Very few Magistrates have ever failed to bring to a successful issue any serious case, or to fully carry out any desired end in which they really took an interest.

We have stated above that numerical weakness in efficiency is not the cause of the Bengal Mofussil Police. It is susceptible of improvement and liable to disorganization accordingly as a strong or a weak arm wields its management. The stoutest robber will pause before he goes to break through a wall or appropriate another's goods when he knows that the police is infallible and will in the end trace him out. But the moment the contrary becomes his conviction, that is, when he sees that he is dealing with either a worthless or, in some cases, a friendly body of policemen, there will be no limit to his daring or his exploits. So is also the case with zemindars and planters. If there is a relentless and impartial Magistrate watching the concerns of the zillah, who is neither accessible to flattery nor to be thwarted in his purpose by threats, who favours no party, and dispenses justice evenly and with sternness, where is the man who will dare to raise his hand to oppress the weak or fight out a dangah with his equals? Under such a police chief there can be nothing but peace in the district. There is observable in the ordinary conduct of our Magistrates a disinclination, arising from what we can call by no other name but fear, to act vigorously when powerful disturbers of the peace have to be dealt with. It sometimes happens that requisitions are made to the commandant of a militia regiment for a detachment of that force, or, as is more generally done, a large body of police burkundazes, jemadars, and darogahs are collected in one place to prevent a breach of the peace and to scare away bands of armed men—lattials and shurke-wallahs—entertained by landholders for the purpose of the dangah. All this might show energy, promptitude, and circumspection on the part of a Magistrate; but in truth, to one accustomed to view these things in their proper light, such proceedings indicate in the official nothing but nervousness and a want of a reliance on his own skill and power. The disordered state of a district is a clear manifestation that it has not been properly ruled; that crimes have been allowed to escape their punishment; and that, from receiving one little indulgence after another the wrong doers have felt themselves so secure of impunity that very naturally they are tempted to bid laws and authority at open defiance. Thus arises the evil which has now become so glaring and intolerable. The consequence in such cases is that a Magistrate at the eleventh hour, when it is too late to retract concessions, and when he finds that his reputation is at

stake, fumbles about and tries to make the most out of his available means. But it might then be too late. The preparations on both the antagonistic sides perhaps are on a grand scale, much money has already been spent, the parties are all but ready to clash against each other, and the game they are about to play out is for a heavy stake. In vain the Magistrate issues perwannahs by scores to his dependent police to apprehend and send in to him the armed men ; in vain he threatens them with dismissal from the service should the fight be allowed to be fought ; in vain he calls upon the interested parties to bind themselves in heavy recognisances to keep the peace. The thing stares him in the face. The police report one morning suddenly announces to him that, although the thannah men had tried their best to dissuade the fighters, and had explained to them the consequences they were tempting, and notwithstanding also the attempts which had been made to apprehend some of them, no heed was taken, and a serious breach of the peace had occurred with fatal results, namely, five killed, seventeen wounded seriously, twenty houses looted, four houses burned, and two munduls kidnaped and carried away on the backs of two elephants. The blood rushes up in the face of the Sareb, and the first vent of anger is directed towards the poor police. " Worthless fellows these," says the Magistrate, " not to be able to prevent these dangahs. Tell them they are suspended from office and ordered to appear before me with explanations." In such circumstances the Magistrate finds it his duty to make a report to the Commissioner. It is then generally regretted that the police should not be stronger to grapple successfully with such occurrences, and the true cause of the occurrence, instead of being sought in defective administration is always explained away as having taken place owing to the corruption, want of vigilance, and weakness of the police. The symptoms of approaching disturbance are not hidden from the knowledge of the Magistrate. Both the police and the parties themselves give sufficient warning from the very first: the one by means of their daily reports, and the other by petitions, incriminatory and recriminatory, against each other. If the authorities do not choose to attend to them in proper time and take proper means to remove the cause of disaffection, they in a manner themselves foster the growth of the evil enesaintrip ; and then when the fire of discord bursts into a flame,

when the little spring accumulates to a sudden torrent, when the gentle breeze is transformed into a tornado, then is blamed all but he who had let slip the opportunity which existed of blowing out the fire when it was but a spark, of shutting up the orifice through which the spring issued, and of putting the vessel in a condition fit to weather the storm when there was time for it. For all desirable purposes, in a peaceful country like this, we are deliberately of opinion that the existing police force is quite sufficient, although in some rare cases it might not be able to prevent a serious dangah brought about by circumstances with which they hardly deem prudent to interfere. But even this inability to cope with dangahs, when the parties concerned having beforehand calculated the responsibility of their actions, are determined to incur it like madmen rushing on certain self-immolation, is not peculiar to the Bengal police alone. In better governed countries, having better organized police forces, riots are as unavoidable. Notwithstanding special acts of the Legislature empowering the police to resort to extreme measures (which unfortunately is not the case here) mobs in Great Britain, when roused, still prove themselves above the power of the defenders of peace, and commit rows much in the same manner as the laltials of Nuddea and the shurkewallahs of Jessore fight a dangah.—*Hindoo Patriot*, February 18, 1860.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

No. 1.

MR. COCKBURN'S CASE.

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PERHAPS one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the charges of lawless violence and oppression that we have so often been compelled to urge against the Indigo Planters, and of the complete impunity with which they can, under the existing laws for the trial of Europeans, commit the most heinous offences, is to be found in the case of Government and Jaubee Bewa, *versus* Majun Ali Khan and others, decided in the Court of Nizamut Adawlut on the 16th September. We say it is one of the strongest proofs that could

be obtained, not because the case is one atom worse than similar cases which day by day occur in every district in Eastern Bengal in which indigo cultivation is carried on ; but simply because by chance the case has come before the district Courts, and the usual defensive weapons of forgery, perjury, and corruption have in this instance not been altogether successful in defeating justice.

The defendants in this case—the servants of a planter—were charged with being concerned in an attack and robbery of a village, in which one of the unfortunate villagers was murdered. The facts of the case are thus fully given in the decision of the Judge :

“ The case is one of those agrarian outrages not unhappily very uncommon in the district, but in this instance deplorable alike from its apparent origin and from the fatal result.

“ It appears that Mr. Wm. Cockburn was proprietor of the Challa Concern, Thannah Shahzadpore, in the sub-division of Serajgunge.

“ Not far from the factory of Challa is the village of Gabgachee, owned by several proprietors, Mr. Cockburn holding in farm the share of one of them.

“ Mr. Cockburn, it seems, required for the purposes of his indigo cultivation the ploughs of the Gabgachee people, and as they were unwilling to give that accommodation, endeavoured to take it by force. The Assistant in charge of Serajgunge, who committed the prisoners for trial, has quite inaccurately observed, that it was sought only to make the villagers work out the advances they had received, but it appears quite conclusive, not only from the evidence of the witnesses, but especially from the confessions of some of the prisoners, (Mohobutoolah *alias* Mufta, and Baluck,) that the Gabgachee people were not under advances, and that, consequently, there was no semblance of right to compel the use of their ploughs.

“ The facts which the evidence appears to establish are these : That on the forenoon of Wednesday, the 23rd March last, as several of the

Gabgachee people were at work ploughing their fields to the south of the village; a considerable body of men, 100 or more, were seen approaching, armed, from the direction of the factory; some four or five of these men came up to within a little distance, and asked the villagers whether they would give the use of their ploughs or not. They said they would not, some of them adding that they had already supplied them with ploughs on several occasions without receiving payment, and were then engaged in their own cultivation.

"The men (sirdars) then replied they would have to give the ploughs, whether they liked it or not; and, it is said, then went to report the result to their employer, who was at a little distance (about 250 yards off) on horse-back. The witnesses go on to say that Mr. Cockburn, being apparently excited by the refusal, used abusive language towards the villagers, and after ordering his men to plunder the place and "mar" the people, rode off towards his factory.

"This may be the proper place to observe that the Assistant Magistrate, who went in person to the spot, considers it certain that Cockburn was not upon the ground: first, upon certain discrepancies in the evidence (which he has not specified), and second, because from actual inspection he was unable to discover in the locality indicated any horsehoof prints; and I think it my duty to remark that, in the first place, in default of actual evidence to the point, it does not appear why horse's hoof marks should have been observable on the ground after 24 hours had elapsed in the latter end of March; and in the next place, if there is any one point on which the evidence for the prosecution seems to agree more than upon another, it is as to the fact of Mr. Cockburn having ridden to within a short distance (two or three hundred yards) of the village lands, received the report of his messengers, and then, after showing signs of anger, and giving certain orders to his men there assembled, having gone away to his factory in which the affray began. To this point I shall have occasion to recur presently, but I must say that, if the statements of the witnesses on this head should be deemed utterly without foundation, as they have been considered by the Assistant Magistrate, it will be impossible to place reliance on any part of their

story, and the prisoners will, in my judgment, be entitled to an acquittal.

"Immediately on receiving these directions, the sirdars previously assembled began to shout *Kalee ! Kalee !* and made towards the village. The Gabgachee men most of them ran off, some of them first loosing their oxen from the ploughs, and some leaving them as they were.

"A few, amongst whom were Momin, *Ketabdee*, and *Sadoollah Fakeer*, offered some sort of opposition, by standing and protesting against the attack. The Assistant Magistrate conceives that the villagers threw clods at the assailants, and it is not impossible that they may have armed themselves for resistance, but there is no evidence of the fact, and at all events it is certain that none of the lattials were hurt, while on the other hand, the three men last mentioned were all wounded by means of surkis or light spears, *Ketabdee* and *Sadoollah* slightly, one in the fleshy part of his thigh, the other in the palm of his hand ; but the third, Momin, received in the first place a wound in the abdomen, which was fatal. He turned and fled a short distance, his course being marked with blood, but was overtaken, and received another wound in the back close to the shoulder-blade, which brought him down, and then lattials coming up inflicted a third and then other wounds ; the rest escaped.

"After this some plunder seems to have taken place, though the evidence is not satisfactory as to this ; but undoubtedly the most part of the cattle of the village, upwards of one hundred head, were driven off to the factory, whence they, or part of them, were taken to the Thannah pound of Shahzadpore under one or more challans said to bear Mr. Cockburn's signature, and were afterwards claimed and recovered by their owners.

"When the aggressors returned the villagers came back, and some of them went to the assistance of Momin, who was found by his cousin Jeetoo Sheikh (witness No. 15) nearly prostrate upon his face and knees, evidently dying. He was taken up and carried to his house,

where, after some inarticulate or barely articulate attempts at speaking, and after taking a little water, he almost immediately died.

"It is stated by Jeetoo, also by the prosecutrix, widow of the deceased, and by his mother *Chundra Bewa* (witness No. 36), that with his dying breath Momin declared that he had received his mortal injuries from *Bagakhan* and *Lalkhan* (prisoners Nos. 1 and 2 at the command of Cockburn) ; but I find it impossible to place any reliance on this statement.

"The friends of the deceased then prepared to carry his remains to Serajgunge, and after an altercation with two burkundazes, who sought to make them proceed by a road which lay through the factory lands (with the purpose, as they conceived, of getting the body into Mr. Cockburn's power), they carried their point, and reached Serajgunge that evening. The information reached Mr. Harvey, the Joint Magistrate, and the body was subjected to medical examination, the result of which is detailed in the evidence of Luchmunger, the Native Doctor (witness No. 32), and leaves no doubt of the manner in which the deceased came by his death.

"There are some observations which I think it my duty to make, and in which I trust the superior Court will concur. One of these relates to the insufficiency of the Joint Magistrate's proceedings as to the proprietor of the factory. In a case so very serious as the present, in which the direct evidence was so strong against that person, where, moreover, the Assistant Magistrate has himself recorded that the factory had collected men for the attack, and also that Mr. Cockburn had sent the plundered cattle to Shahzadpore, thus indisputably connecting him with the offence both before and after the fact, regard being had to the whole circumstances of the case, it does appear to me that further proceedings in regard to Mr. Cockburn were called for, and that the fact or the degree of his guilt should have been made matter for the decision of a jury. It seems to me that a total failure of justice in such a case as this reflects seriously upon the administration of the district, and that it will be hard to make native zemindars responsible for any crimes com-

mitted by their dependants, if in the case of an English planter seriously compromised in a matter of this description no steps whatever are taken to bring the offender to trial.

"The next point to which I must advert is the conduct of the two police burkundazes on this occasion, and to the manner in which the Assistant Magistrate has dealt with it. I have already on more than one occasion stated my strong objection to the system of Mudud burkundazes, that is to say, inferior policemen sent down ostensibly to watch the proceeding of specified persons, but who are usually domesticated with the persons whom they are supposed to watch, and naturally end by neither preventing a disturbance, nor affording the least assistance, when it takes place, either to the parties assaulted or to their superiors in the subsequent investigation.

"This is precisely what has happened in the present case. Two burkundazes, deputed, as Mr. Harvey proclaims, to prevent breaches of the peace, allow a force of lattials to be assembled before their faces, accompany them as amateurs throughout their day's proceedings, and finally, it would seem, do their best to prevent the case from coming in its actual and proper shape before the Magistrate. ,

"The Assistant must have come to one of two conclusions regarding these men : either that they were helpless and blameless, which, indeed, he seems to say, but in that case they should have been made witnesses in the case, and ought to have given most important and unimpeachable testimony ; or else they must be considered as accomplices in the crime, and at any rate grossly failing in the performance of their duties: but then they ought to have been put upon their trial, and either committed to the Sessions, or summarily dealt with under his general powers by the Assistant with powers of Joint Magistrate.

"Neither of these things has been done. The burkundazes have had their statement or " Istifsar " taken, and there, as far as they are concerned, the case has rested.

"It is evident that Mr. Harvey has not been wanting in activity, and I know he is not deficient in shrewdness, but the inquiry has not in these points been closely and judiciously followed up. It may not be matter of surprise that a young officer should fail in these qualities (I mean judgment and decision), but certainly his shortcomings ought to be made up by the vigilance and determination of his superior in charge of the district. It seems too much the case even in difficult cases, and in respect of the most inexperienced officers, to give way to a feeling of *laissez faire*, and to abstain from all interference with the proceedings of subordinates. This is a misfortune to the public and also unfair upon the young officer, as either his faults and omissions are not corrected, or perhaps, when committal has taken place, they are roughly handled by superior officers who must consider that in theory all officers exercising the judicial powers of a Magistrate are alike.

"Upon this subject the Court may perhaps think it worth while to direct a communication to be made to the Commissioner of the Division, or even to Government."

The same old story. The disgraceful proceedings here reported might be taken as stereotyped form of every indigo-planting row for the last thirty years. In fact, these cases are so common, and the particulars so precisely of the same nature, that in these days of printing in public offices and general economy, we are surprised that the Court of Nizamut Adawlut do not issue printed forms of report merely to be filled up by the Judge with the names of the parties and the number of the victims. It would, however, be necessary, in the event of our recommendation being adopted, to leave a space for the decision of the Judge, for, as we have often had to point out, it is not every Judge who would write his opinion in the fearless, straightforward manner that Mr. Lewis Jackson has done. Five years of Hallidayism have taught Judges and Magistrates, that if they value their appointments, they must pocket their consciences in all cases in which Indigo Planters, Police Commissioners, or other Europeans with political influence and power of combination, are concerned. The cases of Mr. Kemp, the late Judge of Malda; of Roy Kissory Chand Mitra, the late Magistrate of Calcutta;



of Baboo Gopaul Lall Mittra, the late Deputy Magistrate of Nattore ; and of Moulvee Abdool Agaiz, the late Deputy Magistrate of Seraj-gunge, are melancholy illustrations of the unfettered operation of such Hallidayism.

But to return to this case. We have, first of all, an Indigo Planter, a broken-down Deputy Magistrate, who buys a factory and turns his mind to the "development of the resources of the country" in the *usual manner*. Now, before indigo can be sown, it is necessary to plough the land, and people in England will probably suppose that some of that vast amount of capital, which Colonization Committee witnesses say is brought into this country by the planters, would be invested in ploughs and cattle ; but this is not the way our sturdy Anglo-Saxons farm. It is all very well for farmer Hobbs and farmer Stubbs, in Norfolk or Suffolk, to keep ploughs and horses : they are obliged to do so ; they do not, like our men, enjoy special rights as representatives of a conquering nation, but are subject to the laws of the land, which our planters are not. In Bengal it is a generally received notion, which has been confirmed by that eminent lawyer, Mr. Theobald, that all persons who can claim to have half a drop of European blood, or even blood and water, in their veins, have an abstract right of preying upon their weaker, though possibly not darker, neighbours : hence ploughs and cattle are needless expenses. The uninitiated may ask how then a planter ploughs his lands ? The simple reply to which is, that a planter has no lands, for that would be another unnecessary expense. By a legal fiction he is supposed to give advances to his tenants for the cultivation of a certain amount of indigo, and by the same fiction it is assumed that, having given these advances, the planter has nothing whatever to do with the crop until the happy peasant brings it joyously into the factory, his hackery crowned with boughs, like the harvest carts at home, and then and there receives from his beaming and benevolent landlord a bag full of bright rupees in payment for the same. Such is the fiction, but we have often shown how very different is the actual fact. We have shown that a man sends out Up-country ruffians to seize his tenantry, and that they are then locked up in a godown and starved until they sign their names to a bond acknowledging their liability for an advance made to

their ancestors of the fourth generation ; and this bond, signed by the ryot, represents, in planting *parlance*, an advance and contract to sow, on the strength of which the planter sends out, as Mr. Cockburn sent at Gabgachee, and seizes all the poor ryots' ploughs, stops their own cultivation, and having made them plough up one another's lands and sow therein his indigo, he considers that he has been merely " seeing that his ryots fulfil their contracts." In this case, *as usual*, the wretched ryots summon up courage to complain to the Magistrate of the threatening attitude taken up by Mr. Cockburn, and the Magistrate, as usual, afraid of getting into a row with his immediate superior, who is probably more theoretical than practical, and has a horror of being written against by the planters in the papers, or being himself on excellent pigsticking terms with the planter, contents himself with giving an order to send out two police peons to keep the peace between about 500 hired and trained ruffians on one side, and 5,000 wretched villagers on the other !!! the same two peons being supposed to be ubiquitously employed in keeping the peace in some 70 or 80 villages. The peons know that this order means nothing at all ; they therefore take into consideration how they can best dispose of their services, and they naturally determine that the planter and the Magistrate, being bosom friends, and the planter being likely to come best out of the fray, the peace can be more advantageously kept by lending the planter a hand than by interfering with him, and attempting to protect the ryots. They turn well over in their minds the probability of the planter going in to dine with the Magistrate sahib, and talking over the case with him while discussing a social glass of after-dinner Bass ; and like some of their betters in the highest ranks of the service, they determine to be on the right side whatever turns up ; they therefore, as shown by Mr. Jackson, " allow a force of lattials to be assembled before their faces, accompany them as amateurs throughout the day's proceedings, and, finally, it would seem, do their best to prevent the case from coming in its actual and proper shape before the Magistrate." And if they are the men we take them for, they took very good care to secure from the planter a certificate, stating how active they had been in endeavouring to keep the peace and keep down the aggressions of the turbulent ryots. We should have thought that, paying what the country does for police corps, some more effectual force than a couple of peons on Rs. 4 a

month might have been detached to keep the peace : but it seems that these corps are only for show and not for use, and it is probable that, even if they had been detached under Mr. Harvey, they would have employed in shooting down the villagers instead of Cockburn and his ruffians.

The point in this case, however, with which we have more particularly to deal, is the impunity with which this man Cockburn is allowed to commit this heinous crime. The men whom he hired are transported, but he is not even put on his defence, and is probably at this moment the honoured guest of the district officials at some *shikar* party.

The judge says that, "if there is any one point on which the evidence for the prosecution seems to agree more than upon another, it is to the fact of Mr. Cockburn having ridden to within a short distance (two or three hundred yards) of the village lands, received the report of his messengers, and then, after showing signs of anger, and giving certain orders to his men there assembled, having gone away to his factory, in which the affray commenced. Immediately on receiving *these directions* the sirdars, previously assembled, began calling *Kalee! Kalee!* and made towards the village."

Now the Nizamut Judge chooses to disbelieve this evidence, because, forsooth, Mr. Harvey did not find any horse's footmarks on the plain!! In the first place, what proof have we of the extent to which the search was made by Mr. Harvey? In the next place, why should he find horse's footmarks in the month of March with the ground as hard as a rock? And, thirdly, what was to prevent Mr. Cockburn having them covered over with earth, supposing them even to have existed? It surely would not be the first time that Mr. Samuells had heard of such a precaution being taken after an affray. As the Judge says, if this part of the evidence is to be disbelieved, then should all be disbelieved. "Oh!" says Mr. Samuells, "but Mr. Harvey says the other part of the story is all true;" so then Mr. Samuells did not try the case on the evidence, but on the report of a Magistrate, who, on the face of the thing, is either very inefficient or very prejudiced.

The attack was not made on a narrow road or lane in which the people could accurately point out the exact spot whence the attacking party had approached. It was on a vast plain; the spectators were at a distance, and we think it very possible that fifty horsemen might have been on the plain without the Magistrate being able, two days after, to find a trace of one of them. But it seems to us that after all it is a matter of trifling importance whether Mr. Cockburn was on the spot or not. What possible motive had any of the attacking party, except to serve Cockburn? They had no quarrel with the villagers. The ploughs were not for *them*, but for Cockburn. The ryots gave notice to the Magistrate that Cockburn was going to attack them, thereby showing that there was a feud with him. It is in evidence, which Mr. Samuells believes, that these people were assembled and started from the factory in which Cockburn was. It is in evidence that the plundered cattle were brought to Cockburn, and challaned by him to the thannah as stray cattle; but because his horse's foot marks could not be found, he escapes scot-free, and the name of *justice* is made to stink in the nostrils of the people. According to the decision in this case, a man may hire a band of assassins, and in the face of the whole world despatch them to murder an enemy; the assassins alone are to be held guilty, the hirer of them is to remain an honoured member of society. We will simply ask, what would have been the case if Ramrutton Roy or Joykishen Mookerjee, Motee Baboo or Abdool Gunny, had been in the place of Cockburn? Would Mr. Harvey have ventured to write such trash about horse's foot-marks? If he had done so, would his Commissioner, from his quiet retreat in a comfortable hill station hundreds of miles away from his work, have given him no directions to bring the principal to justice? Would the Judge not have returned the calendar and directed proceedings to be taken against the principal? Would Mr. Samuells so highly have approved of his proceedings? No, most assuredly not; he would have been recommended to Government for transfer to a sudder station as incompetent and unfit for his duties. But Mr. Cockburn is a European, and this very much alters the case, for Europeans have abstract rights to head affrays attended with murder; and in virtue of Magna Charta no one has a right to say they shall not.

We shall wait to see what steps Government will take to prevent the recurrence of such a gross scandal, and we trust that orders will be given that no case of any sort in which an European is implicated is to be disposed of before the opinion of the Advocate General is taken. That Cockburn would under any circumstances have received his deserts we doubt. A Calcutta Jury would of course have acquitted the deceased, being "only a nigger," but our Mofussil Police would at all events have escaped great opprobrium; and the people are used of late to injustice in the Supreme Court, and would not have expected any thing else.

Since writing the above we find that, on the 9th November, the Court of Nizamut were engaged in hearing another case of affray with murder, arising from indigo disputes in Pubna. In this case a naib of the notorious M. Kenny, of Saloogurmodia, the orator at the Town Hall Anti-Black Act Meeting, who, the Judge says, "there is reason to believe had made himself obnoxious to the people of Panti and some adjoining villages, by some of the petty tyranny practised constantly by men of his class," was said to have been carried off by the villagers and rescued by his friends: during the rescue a villager was killed. There are very suspicious circumstances connected with the case. The prisoners were released.—*Indian Field*, November 19, 1859.

THE fraud and violence which are the inseparable concomitants of the system of indigo planting in Lower Bengal, have attained their highest point of impunity in the district of Rajshahye, through the power, influence, wealth, and audacity of the present body of planters. That district was, before the advent of these developers of its resources, one of the happiest in the country. The ownership of the land was in the hands of a number of families, who believed and felt that there were other pleasures to be derived from the possession of landed property than that of receiving from it so much per cent. higher than Government securities yielded. The head of the local aristocracy was a family of considerably old lineage and high birth, distinguished by traditions which made it hold a high place in the esti-

mation of the Bengallee nation. Its influence was exercised beneficially over the whole district. The soil, fertile in the extreme, yielded abundance to the ryot population who cultivated it. Water communications afforded unusual facilities for the export of superfluous produce. The tenantry were contented, and they were hardly at all affected by the vices which are taught in the vicinity of the metropolis. But from the moment indigo planting was introduced, the face of affairs began to change. The planters, destitute of rights in the land, yet unable to prosecute their calling so profitably as they wished, unless they possessed the coercive powers and influence incident to the position of a Bengal landholder, sought opportunities to acquire landed rights: with their small capital they could not hope to buy up zemindaries. They, therefore, resorted to the usual plan of taking farms of shares in zemindaries, and so annoying the possessors of the remaining shares as to compel them to surrender their portions. Thus it was that by a course of violence and fraud, unequalled in the history of any civilized nation, the greater portion of a district larger than Yorkshire passed into the hands of a few indigo planters who set all law and government at defiance.

The latest instance of violence committed by a Rajshahye planter is reported in the *Englishman* of the 11th instant. Mr. W. Cockburn, of the Challah Concern in the sub-division of Serajgunge, had possessed himself of a share of the village Gabgachee in the usual manner. He wanted the ploughs and labour of the Gabgachee ryots, who wanted then, as might reasonably be supposed, to cultivate their own lands. In anticipation of a fight two Police burkundazes had been posted to watch the factory people. They, as usual, were bought up by the planter. Mr. Cockburn rode down one fine morning to the village fields with more than a hundred clubmen and spearmen. The villagers were found ploughing their fields. They were required to give up their ploughs, which they refused to do. Mr. Cockburn got angry, and ordered his men to use force, and then rode away to his factory. The men advanced, killed one of the villagers, wounded two of them, plundered some houses, and went away with about a hundred head of cattle. The man mortally wounded had but breath to articulate the names of his mur-

derers. When his remains were being carried to Serajgunge, the Police burkundazes, who had been appointed to prevent a breach of the peace, tried to have the body carried by way of the factory, so as to enable Mr. Cockburn to make away with it.

These are the bare outlines of a case, atrocious indeed, but not uncommon in its kind, specially in the district of Rajshaye. The chief criminal, as a matter of course, escaped, Mr. Cockburn not being suspected even by the Assistant Magistrate in charge of the sub-division of any complicity in the affair. One of the spearmen who was proved to have committed the murder has been sentenced to transportation for life, and two others to imprisonment with labour for fourteen years each. The Sessions Judge was of opinion that a case had been made out for sending Mr. Cockburn before a jury, but the Sudder Judge who passed final orders was of opinion that the Assistant Magistrate had acted rightly in not having committed him. This is the old story over again. Not years ago a precisely similar case, though somewhat more serious in its consequence—several lives having been lost and a whole village plundered—was similarly dealt with by the Rajshahye authorities. Some of the latials were punished, but the factor was not even questioned on the matter. Factory dinners, like parbunnie gifts to amlah, are profitable investments.

The question is, how long will such a state of things be suffered to continue? When outrages of this gross description may be committed with impunity, what security can there be for life or property? The planter loses nothing even by the expense of defending the wretches who are his tools in these affairs; for, as he gains his prime object of intimidating his neighbouring villagers, his pecuniary interests are benefited to an extent much greater than they are injured by the costs of a criminal suit. As for the hired ruffians, they know they are born to end their days on the gallows or in jail. To them, it matters only how soon or late they are brought to either. If ever outraged justice cried aloud for the protection of the law, it is in the case of these planting outrages.—*Hindoo Patriot*, November 19, 1859.

No. 6124.

FROM

E. H. LUSHINGTON, Esq.,  
*Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.*

TO

THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NUDDEA DIVISION.

*Fort William, the 23rd October.*

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Reid's letter No. 49, dated the 9th ultimo, submitting the Report called for in orders No. 15, of the 15th August last, on the five petitions presented to the Lieutenant-Governor when at Kishnaghur by certain inhabitants of the Haudea, Maherpore, and Hauskhally Thannahs, complaining of the oppressions practised upon them by Mr. White of the Bansbarriah Indigo Factory.

2. The Report shows that Mr. White, in the several cases referred to in petitions Nos. 1 and 2, was charged with having plundered the houses of the petitioners to a considerable amount of property, cut down their trees, deprived them of their lakhiraj title deeds, and caused the lands in the vicinity of their houses to be dug up, so as to prevent their obtaining ingress thereto, and that the cases were all dismissed by the Magistrate as not proved, although in three of them, *viz.*, in the plunder of property complained of by Umbica Churn Biswas, and in two others, the Deputy Magistrate, Baboo Dwarkanath Dey, to whom the cases were made over, recommended that certain of the offenders should be fined and imprisoned, and required to make good the value of the plundered property.

3. The second case noticed by Mr. Reid is that in which the petitioners charge Mr. White with having plundered their houses and cattle, and object to the order of Mr. Howell, the Deputy Magistrate, referring the case to arbitration. The Officiating Commissioner remarks, that the case was clearly not one for arbitration, and the Deputy Magistrate was wrong in having resorted to that method of adjusting it. It is understood that this case, which was instituted so far back as the 6th



June, is still undisposed of, and that Mr. Reid has given instructions for its being brought to a speedy termination.

4. The case next adverted to is that of Okhill Chunder Biswas, who (as represented by the petitioner himself) was seized when near Mr. White's factory collecting some debts which were due to him, and after being dragged to the factory by Mr. White's men, was flogged by Mr. White himself. The petitioner has then described how he was conveyed as a prisoner from factory to factory for a space of one month, when he escaped; the cause of all this oppresssion being that he had formerly been a servant of the factory, and that having been dismissed from employ, he refused to take advances from Mr. White for sowing Indigo. The Officiating Commissioner remarks on the delay on the part of Mr. Howell in the disposal of this case, which was commenced on the 30th May, and was still pending at the end of August, on his neglect to examine the complainant's person when he first appeared before him to charge Mr. White with the assault and false imprisonment, and on his endeavour to persuade the plaintiff to compromise the case.

5. The trial of the other case of oppression, in which Seetul Turufdar was carried off by Mr. White's men, has resulted in the conviction of six of the factory people, though the individual who had been seized is not yet forthcoming.

6. The Officiating Commissioner reports that he has instructed the present Officiating Magistrate to re-call to his own file such of the cases of the petitioners as may still remain undisposed of, as well as, for the present, any others in which Mr. White and the servants of the Bansbarriah Factory may be parties, and to institute the strictest enquiry as to what has become of the missing man, Seetul Turufdar.

7. The Lieutenant-Governor directs me to inform you that he agrees with Mr Reid in his remarks on the proceedings of Mr. Cockrell, the Magistrate, and Mr. Howell, the Deputy Magistrate, in the case of these disputes, and approves of Mr. Reid's orders in the matter; but I am at the same time desired to observe that the Lieutenant-Governor has de-

rived an unfavourable impression of the manner in which the people have been protected by the Magisterial authorities of Nuddea from oppression such as has beyond doubt been exercised in the cases brought to notice.

8. The Lieutenant-Governor heard in a general way, when on his tour at Nuddea, of complaints from natives that in indigo cases they do not get real protection. And this string of unsatisfactorily investigated and hastily dismissed cases now reported upon makes it impossible for him to feel certainly convinced that every thing can be legitimately done, as has been usually done in that district, to repress abuses of this class. The Lieutenant-Governor does not impute partiality to any of the officers concerned, but he cannot escape the impression that more active and intelligent measures would have had more satisfactory results, whereby all parties should have been made to feel that these disputes must not be settled by the strong hand.

9. The Lieutenant-Governor is surprised that Mr. Cockerell, in his report to the Officiating Commissioner, has omitted all mention of the charge of wrongful imprisonment for a month brought against Mr. White, which as yet stands untreated.

10. These cases, which are known to be of daily occurrence, in which ryots are kidnapped and imprisoned, and carried from place to place by zemindars and planters, with impunity, are a disgraceful blot upon the district administration in Bengal; and it is the duty of every Magisterial Officer to strain every nerve to bring them home to the offenders, where they can obtain a clue to them. On the present occasion there was the person wronged before Mr. Howell, whose evidence, if credited, would prove the case. Instead of doing all that could be done to ascertain the truth, and acting, it must be presumed, in the belief that the charge was true, the Deputy Magistrate recommended a compromise, as though the case had been a trifling squabble or a nominal assault, instead of a charge of one of the grossest acts of oppression and cruelty that can be imagined, short of injury to life or limb.

11. Mr. Cockerell must be called upon to explain his silence in this most grave matter. A Magistrate should not allow himself to be kept by a subordinate in ignorance of such a case having been disclosed ; and if Mr. Cockerell was informed of it, his conduct would appear to be quite inexplicable.

12. So much blame appears also to be attached to Mr. Howell in these proceedings, that the Lieutenant-Governor must call upon him for his defence, in order to take into consideration what orders should be passed on him personally.

13. On receiving Mr. Howell's explanation you will be so good as to forward it with an expression of your opinion as to whether Mr. Howell is yet sufficiently qualified to exercise the special powers of an Assistant to a Magistrate, with which he has lately been vested.

14. In conclusion, I am desired to request that you will insist on the remaining cases against Mr. White being thoroughly sifted, and that you will call upon the present Officiating Magistrate to dispose of them himself, with all the consideration which cases involving such charges may appear to require.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) ED. H. LUSHINGTON,

*Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.*

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No. 2.

MR. WHITE'S CASE.

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THE complaint so bitterly urged by Mr. Mackinlay before Mr. Wilson of the body he represented, being systematically maligned by journals in the interest of the native community is best answered by documents like the one we publish in another column. It is not the *Hindoo Patriot* or the *Indian Field*, or any newspaper edited or owned

by natives, that makes and proves the charge against one of the most notorious of the Nuddea planters. It is the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal himself, a man the very personification of impartiality, who condemns the planter, and avows his conviction that outrages like those committed by him are common in the indigo-growing districts. It is the Commissioner of the Division who, sitting judicially on the cases, reports their heinous nature. It is the Magistrate, through whose neglect and supineness much of the oppression remains unpunished and the chief oppressor goes wholly unpunished, that bears testimony to the guilt of the offenders. It is his executive assistant, a European of the class who, according to Mr. Mackinlay, are the fittest representatives of Englishmen every where in the world, a participator to a certain extent in the guilt he sought to screen, who admits the offence. No malignant native or native journal passed the censure, or tried to see justice overtake the audacious breaker of laws.

These things, if they are calculated to inflame the native mind against the non-official class of the European community, are no less calculated to make the people dissatisfied with the existing order of administration. A system that permits a needy adventurer to set himself up in a position from which, with impunity, he burns and plunders villages, makes away with the persons of obnoxious men, imprisons and flogs them, and levies contributions on all around, cannot be tolerated by a people who in their days of greatest oppressedness never wanted the means of swift and effectual revenge. The law which places the European above itself at the same time deprives the native of his means of self-defence. If the law but ceased to operate for a single day in the Nuddea district, justice would exact all her dues in that one single day. The local ministers of the law have grossly failed in their duty. It is no wonder that the local population to a man charge them with the worst motives for the course of conduct they have been pursuing. An entire change in the *personnel* of the administration, extending to a pretty high grade in the official hierarchy, can alone open the way to redress for past wrongs and security for existing rights.

There was a time when the native could hold his own against the most audacious and rapacious of European adventurers in India. It was

when these latter were responsible to a central despotism beneficent in its rule, and endowed with large sympathies. It was when the local administration was weak enough to leave the natural elements of order fairly to operate, and yet strong enough to despise factious attacks. It was when officials felt it their duty to serve the country without looking to the newspapers for reward, and had not learnt to fear the "proceedings of the Indigo Planters' Association." A wholly different order of things now prevails. With the planter, the good will of the Magistrate, or the belief in its existence, is as necessary to the successful carrying on of the factory work as is the farm of the surrounding land. With the Magistrate or his Assistant, the jolliness of the planter and the accommodations he affords have as many attractions as there are terrors in Mr. Theobald's reports. To ascertain the extent of this intimacy, the Lieutenant-Governor need only call for a return of the number of police darogahs and other subordinate officials dismissed, say within the last five years, for coming in collision with planters or their assistants.

We shall wait to see the result of the action so vigourously and so judiciously commenced by the Government of Bengal. Should it eventually appear that the planting interest is not to be coerced into order by that authority—and we confess we do not look very sanguinely for a decided or beneficial result—it will then be for our countrymen to think whether appeal should not be made to a stronger power.—*Hindoo Patriot*, December 10, 1859.

DOUBTS, real or affected; having been expressed as to the correctness of our statements regarding the outrages committed in the indigo districts, we have endeavoured to procure judicial evidence on the subject. This, we believe, is the orthodox way of proving the thing, though the notoriety of the matters to which we have given publicity is one, we should have thought, which ought to have relieved us from what we cannot help thinking an unjustly improved obligation. We subjoin decisions on one of these cases. The following is the

judgment of the Magistrate of Nuddea on a complaint of some ryots of Govindpore :—

“The subject of this case is the attack made upon the village of Govindpore by a large body of lattials and spearmen, with the plunder of houses of the six complainants, and the forcible abduction of the witnesses Nos. 10 and 11, the expedition having been organized by Mr. William White of Bansbarriah Factory, and led in person by some of the head servants of that establishment. The depositions are too numerous and lengthy for me to analyze them all here, but I will proceed to give a brief, yet, as far as possible, a comprehensive narrative of the case. Early on the morning of Tuesday, the 29th of Bhadro (13th of September) last, a band of club and spearmen, in number estimated at about 100 or 150, suddenly came upon the village of Govindpore. Accompanying them and acting as their immediate leaders were two persons on horses; the one was Bishtoo Ghose, Jemadar of the Bansbarriah Factory, and the other Hurry Chowdhry, Mohurrir of the factory at Hauskhally, (close to Govindpore,) also belonging to Mr. White. The force was also accompanied by two elephants, on which were mounted, according to the complainants, Ramcoomar Biswas, Ramchund Rai, and Obhoye Ghose, all of them amlah of the Bansbarriah Factory, besides several other persons unknown. The identity of the parties on the elephants, I may here mention, is not positively established by the evidence. They did not enter the village, but halted their elephants by some mango trees, at a little distance to the north-west of it, from which direction the band had approached. The above-mentioned Bishtoo Ghose and Hurry Chowdhry, however, led the spear and clubmen into the village, and immediately directed them to pillage it. Accordingly, the nearest houses were plundered in the manner described by the six complainants and numerous witnesses. But by the time the plunderers had proceeded thus far in their work, the whole of the villagers had turned out *en masse*, and were preparing to offer a vigorous opposition to their further progress. The assailants hereupon retreated—indeed, were literally driven out of the village. One of their number, Kubbeer Sheikh, getting separated from the rest, was surrounded by the villagers, knocked down with a lattee, and captured. In their retreat the lattials seized

and carried off two of the villagers, named Koobeer and Oozeer, whom they caught in a sugar-cane plantation a little way outside the village. They then went off in a N. W. direction towards Bansbarriah. In the mean time the alarm had been given to the Hauskhally Thannah, which is about half a mile from the Govindpore village. The Darogah and Naib Darogah were both absent on duty in the Mofussil. Some Burkundauzes immediately came in to the village, and the captured spearman, Kubbeer Sheikh, was given into their custody and conveyed to the Thannah. He had received a severe wound in the head from the lattee with which he had been knocked down.

"The Darogah and Naib Darogah of Hauskhally being absent from the Thannah, the Moonsiff of that place, Mr. Hutchinson, immediately, and very properly, reported the occurrence to me by a letter, which reached me in the course of the day. I immediately deputed the Kutwallee Darogah to make full investigation of the case on the spot, and this duty could not have been entrusted to a more able and energetic officer. When he arrived at the village, he found the Hauskhally Darogah already there, ~~he~~ having lost no time in proceeding thither after receiving intelligence of the affray. The prisoner, Kubbeer Sheikh, made a full confession, revealing all he knew of the affray. This he repeated before me on his arrival in the station, on the morning of the 15th of September. An important part of his narrative is, that on the evening preceding the affair, the band was mustered in the Bansbarriah Factory, and personally inspected by Mr. William White.

"On the 16th of September, I myself visited Govindpore, and satisfied myself that this outrage had actually been perpetrated. My visit was quite unannounced and unexpected, so that I was able to put full confidence in the evidence presented to my own eye-sight. The tracks of two elephants were plainly visible in the place indicated by the villagers, as that ~~where~~ they had been halted during the plunder. I also observed the marks of horse-hoofs. There was also to be remarked a regular path of trampled-down paddy, as if a number of men had recently passed over ~~it~~. The plundered houses bore evident marks of having been looted.

"The facts of the case, as I have stated them, are clearly and abundantly proved by the evidence. Mr. William White was himself present in court during the examination, and cross-examined each witness as fully as he desired, and I cannot but say that in no important point was the testimony of any witness shaken. Against many of the defendants arrested by the police, the evidence before me was insufficient for conviction, but the three defendants, Shadoo Churn Ghose, Kylash Ghose, and Thakoor Sheikh, are proved to have taken a very active part in the plunder. Their defence is an *alibi*, by which they attempt to show that at the time of the occurrence they were in attendance in this Court on bail. The fact of their being on bail is quite compatible with that of their having taken part in the attack on Govindpore. I convict them of the charge, and sentence them to suffer imprisonment each for six months, with labor commutable in each case to a fine of 20 Rs. if paid within ten days. I convict Kubbeer on his own confession as well as the evidence, and sentence him to the same punishment.

"With regard to Mr. William White, the whole circumstances of the case point to him directly as the instigator of the outrage. The actual presence of his factory servants has been clearly shown. The witnesses Nos. 10 and 11 distinctly prove that after their capture they were taken as prisoners to Bansbariah and there brought into Mr. William White's presence, who gave orders concerning them. The confession of Kubeer Sheikh implicates him directly. He, in his defence tendered through a Mooktear, denies all knowledge of the affair, but he calls no evidence in support of it. I find it impossible to come to any other conclusion than that he was the instigator and organizer of the outrage, for which he has been called upon to answer. I cannot deal with him as with the other defendants,—I therefore sentence him to pay a fine of 300 Rupees."

L. R. TOTTENHAM,  
Magistrate.

The judgment of the Zillah Judge, before whom the case was carried by appeal, is thus worded :

"There is an abundance of direct evidence showing the three first appellants to have taken an active part in the offence with which they



are charged, and in addition to the direct evidence against the other appellant, Mr. White, the whole circumstances of the case most clearly show that the outrage was committed with his knowledge and by his orders. There is not the slightest ground for any interference with the sentence passed. The appeals are accordingly dismissed."

A. LITTLEDALE,  
*Session Judge.*

One plea remains to be urged by the apologists of the indigo system. Mr. White might be disowned as one of the "black sheep." We shall see.—*Hindoo Patriot*, January 21, 1860.

### No. 3.

#### MR. MEARES'S CASE.

THE KIDNAPPING QUESTION.—There is scarcely a man, woman, or child in Bengal who will not endorse to the full the assertion of the Bengal Government, that cases of kidnapping by zemindars and indigo planters are of daily occurrence. The Secretary to the Indigo Planters' Association may feel it a duty to "report" that the fact is otherwise; but as he limited his enquiries to a few neighbours of Mr. White, who are constituents of his society, the nation probably will decline to alter its convictions on his "report." Kidnapping is now the approved process by which ends that were formerly secured by the *hufstum*, and in more recent days by the *punjum*, are now sought to be attained. And a more effectual process it is than either of the two we have mentioned. Short, sharp, severe, unflinching, it has supplanted methods of proceeding comparatively tedious and not always successful. The case of Seetul Turufdar, mentioned in the Government letter we published three weeks ago, furnishes an illustration. Seetul Turufdar was kidnapped near the Hauskhally Factory of Mr. White, which is under the superintendence of Mr. Hampton. He was first taken to that factory, severely wounded. And here we would correct a slight error in our former statement. He was

not taken from Hauskally to the Bidjee Factory. From Hauskally, Seetul Turufdar was carried to the Bansbarriah Factory of Mr. White, and thence to Sonatollah and other factories belonging to the same gentleman ; and lastly, when secrecy in that part of the country became impossible, he was dragged to the Sindoorree Factory in Zillah Jessore, whose manager, Mr. George Meares, is well-known all around as the "terrible planter," and who, we believe, is a near relative of Mr. Hampton. Mr. Hampton must know of Seetul Turufdar's death, which, beyond the shadow of a doubt, took place at Sindoorree.

The fact of the missing man's death while he was in the private custody of Mr. White's friends and diabolical agents at the Sindoorree Factory is supported by evidence internal and circumstantial ; and positive direct evidence will, we believe, be procurable. But so secret was the fact kept of the unfortunate man's death while at Sindoorree, such is the terror inspired by Mr. Meares's name in all the places subject to his influence, that it will require more than ordinary courage and tact on the part of the authorities to bring those who were the cause of his death to immediate justice. The Commissioner, Mr. Reid, and the Magistrate, Mr. Drummond, will not, if we may be allowed to form an opinion from their antecedents, want nerve to face the peculiar difficulties of this case ; and if they depute trustworthy Darogahs to investigate it, truth will surely come to light. The eyes of the whole population of the district are now rivetted on this case, and it becomes the paramount duty of the authorities to dispose of it in a becoming manner.

The fate of Seetul Turufdar is a specimen of a class of occurrences which without much expenditure of rhetoric may be said to have become extremely frequent. It is indeed a terrible fate ; and those who taunt the ryots of Bengal with cowardice and inertness under injury sustained may do well to conceive the danger to which he exposes himself by resisting oppression,—a danger from which he is very ineffectually protected by the law. No amount of individual caution will avail against it—no machinery exists to exact adequate atonement for the suffering inflicted. To be struck down on the high way, bound and carried across long fields and jungles to the secure godowns of the factory or the cutcherry, and to

be there subjected to torture and starvation until compliance with the most unjust demands is yielded, are matters which the ryot may be excused for thinking very seriously of. Occasionally, the atrocity of the act is heightened by the plunder of the houses and the dishonouring of their female inmates. If ever an evil was to be repressed, it is the prevalence of the kidnapping system.—*Hindoo Patriot, December 31, 1859.*

**THE KIDNAPPED.**—When, in the postscript to our notice of the great case of *Mr. G. Meares versus The Publisher of the Hindoo Patriot* we enquired where the nephew of Ramrutton Mullick of Joyrampore then was, we scarcely expected to receive so soon so satisfactory a reply. It is true that our respondent is a no higher authority than a Darogah of Police, but there are things which commend themselves to the sagacious and impartial as truthful from their internal marks. The following is a true translation of a report made by the Darogah of Thannah Harradee to the Magistrate of Zillah Nuddea :—

“In obedience to the order passed on the back of the accompanying petition, Madhub and Bhoobun Mullicks of Joyrampore, in the jurisdiction of Thannah Damorhoodah, came to the Thannah at about 10 in the evening of day before yesterday, and said that Mr. G. Meares had kept Tarunchunder Mookerjea in confinement in the Sindoorree Factory within the jurisdiction of Thannah Kaloopole in Zillah Jessore, and would remove him on an elephant the next morning, when, if not liberated, it would be difficult to effect his rescue afterwards. I started immediately on horseback, with Rajib, Kader, and Bhurrut Sing, Burkundauses, and picked up on the way two chowkeedars from Awludengee and six from Belgatchee. I arrived near Sindoorree towards dawn, but not finding Madhub and Bhoobun there, went to the Kaloopole Thannah for aid. The Darogah had gone into the Mefussil. I sent word to him and posted men on the roads. At about 11 in the morning, the abovenamed Tarunchunder Mookerjea, accompanied by Mr. Meares's writer, Kadernauth, came on an elephant to the Kaloopole Thannah, and there before me stated to the Mohurri, “I was not a prisoner, and Mr. Meares has sent me to the Thannah to tell you so.”

On my questioning Tarunchunder Mookerjee, he said, that he was a prisoner, but that Mr. Meares having promised to do him benefits, he came to the Thannah and deposed that he had not been a prisoner. "I am come to say so." I brought him away to his home at Joyrampore, and having reached the Thannah to-day, submit his statement. Mr. Meares's influence in that part of the country is such, that even the Thannah people dare not disobey his commands. It is surprising that a person kept in confinement should come to the Thannah to say that he was not in confinement, and this person dared not say anything else. What more-over, &c.

(Signed) BYDNAUTH MOOKERJEE,  
*Darogah, Thannah Harradee.*

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#### No. 4.

#### MR. MACARTHUR'S CASE.

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"ABSTRACT RIGHTS" OF THE PLANTERS.—The name of MacArthur is not altogether unknown in connection with *The Indian Field*. All will recollect how, when we had occasion to comment upon some of the disgraceful oppressions of the indigo system, a testy old gentleman of that name came forward and proposed to gag this journal, and stated that all our disclosures regarding the vile tyranny habitually practised by the Blue Fraternity were the grossest libels and falsehoods that a diseased and prejudiced mind could invent. If we recollect aright, either he, or some of the small deer who joined his cry, denounced us as traitors and rebels, for merely hinting that it was possible that a free-born Briton could be guilty of locking up his ryots in a godown for weeks together, because they would not sow indigo. The *Dacca News* declared that it was outrageous to suppose that a planter would have recourse to perjury, or that he ever got up false cases. The planter, it was stated, was always a victim; he was constantly liable to have false charges brought against him, but his high sense of honour compelled him to prefer ruin rather than have recourse himself to similar weapons. And the great losses that the indigo planters were subjected

to on account of their superfluity of honourable feeling was actually made the ground of an application to the Legislature to pass an Act, investing the planters with special facilities for obtaining the property of others without payment.

We have now an opportunity of bringing forward another member of the distinguished clan of MacArthur to meet the denials of the fiery little chief of the clan. Our Mr. MacArthur is not altogether a willing witness ; but this being so, his evidence is all the more trustworthy, so far as it goes. It appears that, on the 23rd of February, a petition was presented to the Magistrate of Jessore, mentioning amongst other things that *Bolai Sheikh and others* had been confined by Mr. MacArthur of Meergunge, in his factory, for about nineteen days. This being the normal state of the Jessore ryots the Magistrate does not appear to have adopted any very extraordinary measures for their release ; he, however, sent the petition to Mr. Bainbridge, the Joint Magistrate of the Gopalgunge sub-division, on the 16th April. It so happened that Mr. Bainbridge was going to dine with Mr. MacArthur on the 16th, and he thought himself of combining pleasure and business ; and whilst on his way to dinner at Meergunge, a boy came up to him and offered to point out the godown in which the prisoners were. On arriving at the godown door, the Joint Magistrate, like a second Blondel, attracted the attention of the captives, and having satisfied himself that they were really in confinement, as asserted, he sent for Mr. MacArthur and ordered him to produce his keys, and released the unfortunate *Bolai and three other prisoners*. They were sent off to Mr. Bainbridge's camp, and Bolai then stated, that he had long been in confinement, because, having been ruined by being compelled to sow indigo, he had at length been forced to leave his land and crops and abscond. The others were confined, because they would not acknowledge Mr. MacArthur to be the proprietor of an estate which had been purchased by a native zemindar, and which apparently Mr. MacArthur coveted.

Bolai Sheikh deposed to the Magistrate that, when taking his cows down to the river to drink, some of the factory servants seized him and beat him till he became senseless ; that on recovering his senses, he was

carried to the Noakholla Factory, where he was taken before Mr. MacArthur of Borjella, who directed him to be taken under a guard to Meergunge : his zemindar, Bisheshur Chucklanuvees, came to Mr. MacArthur and offered to stand bail for his appearance, when wanted. Mr. MacArthur, however, refusing this proposal, took him in his own boat as far as the factory of Borjella, from whence he was escorted under a guard to Churnundeea. On his arrival there, the factory dewan ordered him to be locked up in a godown, and he was accordingly locked up in a room with another prisoner with irons on his legs ; after ten days' confinement he was sent to Meergunge, and was then chained and locked up with five or six others. He concludes in the following words :—"I was released by the Joint Magistrate after a confinement of two months ; formerly I was a resident of Doljoree, but now I am a ryot of the Chucklanuvees. I had an advance from the Churnundeea Factory, but I escaped last year and ran away after sowing the indigo crop. I do not owe the factory any rent."

The old story—a ryot is compelled to sow indigo, and when he can no longer stand the oppression and extortion, which is apparently part of the necessary process of manufacture, he runs away, leaving his home, crops, and everything he possesses. The factory servants are sent out to apprehend him, and he is thrown into an outlaw jail for three months.

Another of these unfortunate victims, Muneeroodeen, says that, in the month of Aghrun, his brother, Tumeezoodeen, was carried away by the order of the gomashta of Luckheepassa Factory, on his way to the market, and was released after paying to the factory the rent of the land, which had lately been purchased by Baboo Ram Rutton Roy. On his brother's return, Muneeroodeen went to the Meergunge Factory, to close his accounts, but was put in confinement for twenty days, on a pretence that there was a balance of Rs. 13 in favour of the factory. Poornoo Chunder Bhuttacharjea paid the demand for him and effected his release. On the zemindar's gomashtas coming to the village, they were driven by the factory servants, and the man Muneeroodeen was seized and carried off to the Luckheepassa Factory, and confined for one month ; subsequently he was carried off to the Noakholla Factory and ordered to

*file a false petition in the Magistrate's Court, stating that his own landlord, Ram Rutton Roy, had assembled 125 latteals for the purpose of breaking the peace. This man was then, according to the account he gave to the Magistrate, sent to Meergunge and confined in irons, and was subsequently released by the Joint Magistrate. He states that the cause of his confinement was the fear that he would enter the service of the zemindar who had just purchased the estate, and by giving him valuable information regarding the estate benefit him : as the baboo was an opponent of the factory, this was not to be allowed.*

Fuqeer Mahomed deposed to having been confined eight or nine days at Meergunge, and one month at Luckheepassa. He says that he and another prisoner were *starved for three days, until they consented to present a false petition to the Magistrate.*

Mr. Bainbridge, the Joint Magistrate, who released these men, deposes as follows :—“I was riding to the Meergunge Factory on the 16th March, when a boy came and offered to show me where Bolai, of whose detention I had before received verbal complaints, was confined, in Meergunge Factory. He took me to the godown and called ‘Bolai’ through the loopholes, when he was immediately answered by a voice which said that the speaker and others were confined there. I demanded the keys from the factory people who presented themselves ; as no one brought them, I sent my salaam to Mr. MacArthur. On that gentleman's arrival, I told him that there appeared to be some men in confinement, and requested that he would have the key brought that I might release them ; he had it brought, and the door was opened by the chowkeedar ; upon this the said Bolai and three others came out ; as they all complained of detention unlawfully long, I placed them in charge of my syce and kidmutgar and sent them to my tent. I first heard of Bolai's confinement on receipt of the letter from Mr. Molony (the Magistrate), which is filed. On the morning of their release, Bistoo Chucklanuvcees, whose quarrel with Mr. MacArthur I was in camp at Noakholla to settle, came and told me that Bolai and I think Noboo were confined by Mr. MacArthur. I distrusted him, saying, that I did not believe Noboo's case, which had been tried before, and that I not only thought the case false, but had

*asked Mr. MacArthur about him, when he denied all knowledge of the matter.* Bistoo answered that 'he did not think Mr. MacArthur would deny Bolai's case.' I said also that I did not know the place of confinement; but if a guide were sent, I would do what I could to release him. I went to cutcherry, and, on crossing the river afterwards, the boy above-mentioned came to me; he ran away directly after the release, at least I never saw him afterwards. As far as I remember, the letter about Bolai, &c., was read out by the peshkar of my office in my tent at Noakholla, in the presence of Mr. John MacArthur and his father and others. I do not remember any comments being made. As far as I recollect, one of the men said something about irons; they had none on and came out at once: there is no other door to the godown. I believe the boy told me that he was in the habit of taking food to Bolai. I think he told me so. Mr. MacArthur's first remark, on my asking for the key, was, 'Have you seen them?' I replied that I had heard them. When the chowkeedar came with the key, Mr. MacArthur asked 'Who have you in there?' The chowkeedar replied, 'Men for rent.' Shortly after he (MacArthur) described some facts relative to their seizure, but these he may have ascertained from his servants. Mr. MacArthur afterwards remarked that the man was a heavy defaulter, and that one had been sent from Lukheepassa market, whence he had come one day. Bolai said to me that he had been seized at Noakholla, and one or two said they had been seized at Lukheepassa. Bolai said he had been confined two months. No one said less than twenty days."

But perhaps the defence set up by Mr. MacArthur is about the most impudent part of the whole proceeding. He denies all knowledge of the confinement of these men in his own compound, and, apparently, considers himself much aggrieved by Mr. Bainbridge's releasing them: he considers it a sort of family matter, with which the police could not possibly have any concern. He says "that Mr. Bainbridge had shortly before been staying with me, and that, on his leaving my house, I invited him to dinner again on the 16th, and, accordingly, when on the 16th I heard that Mr. Bainbridge wanted me at the godown, thinking that some accident had happened to him on his way from Noakholla, where he was holding cutcherry, and that he did not like to make his appear-



ance before my wife and family in a disabled state, I hurried off to the godown to see what was the matter. I was not a little surprised at Mr. Bainbridge's demand for the key."

As the men were released by the Joint Magistrate in his presence, he of course cannot deny the illegal confinement. He therefore confines himself to a declaration, 1st, that he knows nothing about the matter; 2nd, that they were ryots taken *in the usual way* for a settlement of their accounts that morning, and that they were put into the godown for safe custody!!! I never saw the men in my life, and never even heard their names, and most probably should never have heard of them at all, but for Mr. Bainbridge's release, as their accounts *would have been settled in the morning in the usual way*, and they would have been released."

This is a cool confession to make before a Magistrate. It shows that it is an every day sort of affair to have men locked up in the factory godown, so much so that it was not even reported to the planter: every thing in his opinion was quite regular, having been done "in the usual manner." In this he is undoubtedly right, a planter's ryots spend a considerable portion of their existence locked up in godowns, till they settle accounts or sign contracts: there can be little doubt in whose favour the settlement is, if a ryot has to be confined in a damp godown for two months, and starved for three days, and chained before he consents to settle. But this we are assured by Mr. MacArthur is nothing out of the common, it is all "in the usual way." Well may that eminent jurist and agitator, Mr. Theobald, say, that the ryots change their freedom for a new condition" when they begin to deal with the planters. We suppose that Mr. Bainbridge is one of those "firebrands" alluded to by the Secretary of the Indigo Planters' Association, who have dared "to preach to the ryots abstract rights." We suspect that it will take a good deal of preaching of abstract rights to make the ryots forget their *abstracted* rights. Whatever Mr. Theobald may have been alluding to in his report; it is clear that Mr. MacArthur includes Mr. Bainbridge amongst "the firebrands." He considers himself an aggrieved man, and we only hope that he will send his grievance home. He says in his defence:—"I stated to Mr. Bainbridge that I thought his character as a Govern-

ment Officer would have been equally upheld by deputing his Darogah or any other subordinate Officer to make the necessary enquiries, instead of taking the matter in hand himself, the more particularly as he was acting on the simple assertion of persons whom he promiscuously met in a field on his way to my house as a *private guest*. This, coupled with his total want of jurisdiction (?), made me feel that his conduct on the occasion was *not only illegal but uncalled for*, particularly as he did not give himself the trouble to enquire whether I was acting legally or otherwise as zemindar, a circumstance which does *not seem to have occurred to him at all*." We should think not; it is not very clear why it should have occurred to the Magistrate that any one could legally lock men up in godowns for five minutes even, much less for two months. Mr. MacArthur thinks that the Magistrate acted improperly in releasing the men at a time when he was coming to dine with him. Now to us it appears that he was not acting improperly in releasing the men, but in going to dine with the planter; in accepting the invitation, he must have been aware that in all probability, whilst he was dining with the planter, the godown would be full of unfortunate ryots confined "in the usual way." It is this system of hob-hobbing between planters and officials at Jessore and other indigo districts, which is the cause of half the misery of the people. The Magistrate finds the planters jolly good fellows, notorious for hospitality, and shuts his ears to all the reports of skeletons in the factory closets. The consequence is, that the ryots, who see that the Magistrate is constantly at the factory where they are locked up within a few yards of him, without getting their release, learn to believe that it is useless to complain against the planters at the Courts. Mr. Bainbridge appears to have been one of these confiding young men. When he received a complaint against Mr. MacArthur, he asked that gentleman whether it was true, and because he denied it, he believed the case to be false, and made no further enquiries. He goes and stays with Mr. MacArthur and dines with him whilst all these cases are pending; but by some good fortune stumbles into the godown. His eyes, however, are opened for the future, and he will now understand why those officials, whom he has probably considered prejudiced men, have been chary of intimacy with the non-official residents of their district. It is not often that a Jessore or Kishnagur planter gets caught, as they have the whole country in

their possession; but we trust that this case will open the eyes of some of the officials in the indigo districts, and induce them always to have a look at the godowns before sitting down to their Sunday dinner at some favourite factory. This will, at all events, give the prisoner one day's change of air in the week, if it does nothing else. Our English readers will now understand the cause of the distance that officials are accused of placing between themselves and the planters, and which has been so much complained of.

In conclusion, we would ask the Government, how much longer this system of slavery is to be continued on the score of "expediency?" The condition of the ryots in indigo districts is positively worse than that of slaves in the worst Slave State, yet Government shuts its eyes, because it is not "expedient" to interfere. Who will be made the scape-goat when the people are goaded into taking the law into their own hands? Mr. MacArthur's is no exceptional case, similar scenes are enacted daily in every factory in Bengal, except that the people dare not complain, and that when they do, a darogah is sent, the result of which deputation Mr. MacArthur evidently understands.

Mr. MacArthur, instead of being compelled to undergo a little of that confinement which he thought so good for his ryots, escaped with a paltry fine of Rs. 300, which will be paid by his ryots "in the usual manner."—*Indian Field*, July 9, 1859.

WE publish among our correspondence a letter signed INDIGOPHILUS. It is difficult to say whether it is a genuine outburst of free-born British feeling, or whether it is written ironically; the sentiments are precisely those which we know to be entertained and continually enunciated by two-thirds of the planters of Bengal, and the facts related are perfectly probable. INDIGOPHILUS's history of his mode of making his four lakhs is probably the history of nearly every planter in the country, and whether it is a real narrative or a fancy sketch, it certainly gives no exaggerated notion of the manner in which the resources of the country are developed by "the pioneers of England's"

fortunes." How many of those gentlemen who abused the old Government of the Company as throwing impediments in the way of settlers began with so much as a single cowree, or without, what is worse than nothing, a heavy debt at high interest from a Calcutta broker? How many men who have begun in this way have gone home with immense fortunes screwed out of the people of the country? There are at the present moment in this country men who commenced their career in the East in the ranks of the army, and who are now worth ten or twelve lakhs of rupees. Is it then to be wondered at that the rising generation of adventurers should grumble, because with the change of the times and the natural progress of civilization, the iniquitous system under which their predecessors have so long been enabled to prey with impunity upon the ignorant and helpless natives of the country should have commenced to receive a check? The Government is greatly to blame for tolerating the system so long, and for only after so many years of indifference commencing to take measures to afford relief to the ryots in the Court. The fact is that the Company found it necessary to keep on tolerable terms with these men on account of the unscrupulous manner in which they vilified the Government at home: but the Queen's Government has nothing of the sort to fear; there is no Charter to be periodically renewed, and no higher authority to do mischief with constant interference; the adventurers may agitate or falsify as they choose, they have no longer an appeal to make from the Government of the Company to the Government of the Crown; their only appeal now is from Cæsar drunk to Cæsar sober, from Conservative to Liberal and from Liberal to Conservative. The Government can afford now to treat these gentlemen as they deserve, and with the Criminal Code, which is certain of being passed in the course of a year, and with the amalgamation of the Courts, they will find that they will have to pay a little more respect to the person and property of their weaker neighbours. They will no longer be able to extort sales of lands or ten years' contracts to sow indigo by the shoe or the godown, and they will have to pay for what they want like honest people. *Ramkunt* and *Samchurn* will have to give place to law and reason, and the race of INDIGOPHILOI will have to go to the Zambesi or Feejee, if they wish to develope the resources of the world according to their present system. Even yet the planters are

permitted to enjoy the most extraordinary and unjust privileges in conducting their suits in the Mofussil Courts. A planter's simple unsupported assertion is considered in indigo districts to be indisputable evidence of the most improbable events ; we will give one out of many such instances that have lately come to our knowledge of the undue weight which is given to uncorroborated statements of interested Europeans in suits brought against them by natives. We had occasion a few weeks ago to introduce to our readers a planter of Jessore. We showed there that the Assistant Magistrate, Mr. Bainbridge, threw aside a most serious criminal charge against that gentleman, simply because he himself denied its truth. Mr. Bainbridge, however, by a fortunate stumble in the dark into a godown had ocular demonstration of the truth of the charge and the falseness of the planter's denial. One would have thought that this would have convinced the authorities of Jessore of the value that should be attached to any statements that planters might make in future in cases in which they were concerned ; but it does not appear to have had this effect. In May last certain ryots who had been, like all the ryots of Jessore, compelled for many years to sow indigo, wishing to free themselves from such slavery, applied to the Judge of Jessore to examine their accounts summarily under Regulation V. of 1830, and take from them any balance that might be shown against them in the factory accounts, and release them from any further compulsion to sow indigo. \*

Now this Regulation V. of 1830 has hitherto been nearly a dead letter in Bengal ; scarcely any ryot has before dared to have recourse to it. The Jessore planters were therefore perfectly dumb-founded at this bold attempt on the part of the ryots to release themselves, their feelings were much those of a Virginian planter on the announcement of an abolition meeting on the borders of his estate : however, they fortunately rose with the occasion, and having found a construction of the Court of Dewanny Adawlut, to the effect that no such summary release could be given during the existence of a specific contract for any fixed term, the planter who was complained against went into the Judge's Court, and asserted that all these ryots had contracted to sow indigo for him from 1854 to 1864, in consideration of an advance given them in 1854 of Rs.

2 per beegah!! In corroboration of this statement the planter filed what is supposed to be the contract, a most extraordinary document, witnessed by a couple of factory servants, whereby a number of ryots bind themselves over for ten years to sow indigo, and give it into the factory at five bundles for the rupee, deducting the price of weeding, cutting, and conveying indigo, and stamp, &c. In the event of their working off the advance (an impossibility in the way the factory accounts are kept), they engage to take a fresh advance, and in the event of their failing to take such advance, the planter is to take forcible possession of the land, and fine the ryots Rs. 10 per beegah for the remainder of the term of ten years; if at the expiry of the lease anything is due to the factory, the ryot is to pay five times the amount due. And this impudent document was actually received by the Judge on a mere statement of the planter, unsupported by a single word of evidence, and the ryots were refused any redress or release, and, what is worse, the Judge gave an opinion that this extraordinary contract was genuine; the ryots are therefore shut out from all chance of redress if they are sued on this paper in the Moonsiff's Court. Is it to be wondered at that the ryots of Bengal are becoming desperate under such oppression? We do not blame the Judge, whose interest in the agricultural classes is notorious; his decision was perhaps correct according to law. What we object to is his ready admission of the contract against all probability simply because the planter said it was all correct: he probably meant nothing more than that there was *prima facie* ground for refusing *summary* adjudication under that particular Act; but if a simple assertion by one of the parties, that a contract exists, is to shut the opposite party out, the Act becomes a dead letter. It is not as if both parties admitted the existence of this contract, the ryots denounced it as a forgery. This refusal by the Judge, on the grounds that "the kubooleuts do not seem other than genuine," prejudices the case moreover against the ryots in the event of subsequent proceedings. It must be recollected that contracts of this sort for ten years are things entirely unheard of in Jessore. Is it probable that any ryot for an advance of 12 Rupees, or 2 Rupees per beegah, from which are to be deducted price of stamp; 3 Rupees for seed, 8 Rupees for rent; 3 Rupees for cultivation; to say nothing of the expense of cutting and bringing in the plant, and the loss of the rice crop he

would have had if he did not sow indigo, would bind himself over body and soul for ten years? Even the items we have noted show that 15 Rupees have by the factory process to be *deducted from the 12 Rupees*; and besides all this there are the ameens, khalassees, gomashas to be paid fees *ad libitum*, and an occasional nuzzer of 1 rupee to the planter when he does the Lord Bountiful and visits his people. Now these 6 beegahs of indigo would probably average 60 bundles of indigo, which, even omitting all the cheating that takes place in measuring it, would fetch the ryots in 12 Rupees, but he has had to pay, as shown above, 15 Rupees; he therefore binds himself over to pay the factory 3 Rupees per annum for ten years from his own pocket. Is it probable or even possible that a ryot should of his own free will make such a contract, unless indeed he was subjected to the two months of godown process which we lately had the pleasure of showing up in connection with the Meergunge Concern?

We ask again, how long are such things to be?—*Indian Field*, July 30, 1859.

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### No. 5.

## THE ZEMINDAR AND THE PLANTER.—A TALE OF 1858.

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Koylash Chunder Roy Mohashoy is a near relative of the Maharajah of Nuddea, and an inhabitant of a village named Digumburpore, which is within a mile towards the north-west of the Khalboaleah Indigo Factory, Thannah Dowlutgunge, Zillah Nuddea.

Fifty years ago, when Mr. George Harris first came to Bengal as an indigo planter, he could not induce any of the big zemindars to give him either a piece of land, or even to assist him in setting up his factory. The grand-father of Koylash Chunder Roy, named Shumbhoonath Roy, however, came to Mr. Harris's assistance, and gave him the farm of several of his villages, and also presented him with a piece of ground in Khalboaleah to build his factory on. This will explain the reason why the principal factory of such a rich estate as that of the Khalboaleah Concern

has been erected in such an inland and inconvenient locality, removed a considerable distance from the river side. Subsequently, Mr. George Harris, and after his death, Mr. Francis Harris, greatly enlarged their sphere of manufacture, and founded a large number of subordinate factories in the country all around. This rich concern is now the property of the Bengal Indigo Company, and is managed by a resident European superintendent whose head quarters are at Khalboaleah.

Up to a very late period the descendants of Shumbhoonath Roy were on friendly terms with the concern, and have hitherto confirmed repeatedly the lease which their grand-father had acceded to.

But the times are materially changed. The indigo planters of the present day are not of the stamp their predecessors were. The influx of a large body of their number into the Mofussil, their intelligence, and above all the position of their agents and representatives, backed in the generality of cases by the partiality of the Government officials, have made them indeed a very powerful and influential class of men. But, alas! what consequences have resulted from this accession of power? There will be no necessity of using abstract terms to describe the manner in which the body of planters are using their power, as the following narrative will best illustrate it.

For some years past, the subordinates of the Khalboaleah Concern have begun not only to treat the descendants of Shumbhoonath Roy with personal disrespect, but also to damage their property, by cutting down large trees, bamboos, &c., and appropriating these to the use of the factory without paying for them, or even asking any permission beforehand. Above all, rents were not punctually paid, and even when such payments were ordered to be made by the superintendent, the Roys never had the money to pay themselves without first paying a portion of it to the amlah of the factory. Besides the above, these landholders had to dance attendance day after day before the cutcherry door to the factory, for weeks together, like an indigo ryot, when soliciting payment of their just dues. If the landholders or their servants ventured to remonstrate against these indignities, they were subjected to the most



insulting language. On one occasion, the gomashta of Koylash Chunder Roy, after frequenting the factory for several days, during which the payment of rent due to his master as a shareholder of Shumbhoonath Roy's estate was deferred, committed, in the eyes of the factory naib, the unbearable offence of asking the latter to name a particular day on which it would be convenient for him to pay the money, and not to give him the unnecessary trouble of coming daily to the factory from a distance, and there to wait and spend whole days, much to the injury of his other business. The naib got irritated at this, and ordered the man to be confined in the godown. There that man remained, and was released only after his master came and offered the fullest apology for the fault of his servant.

This sort of treatment was too humiliating to be long borne by a relative of the House of Nuddea, which has for centuries held the highest Position in native society. Koylash Chunder naturally got vexed with the factory people, and as the term of the ijara lease was to have gone out that year, he determined no longer to favour the concern with its renewal, and accordingly gave away his share of the parental estate to a native talookdar named Frankisshen Pal. The factory people felt themselves offended at this, and concocted plans of revenge. The new lessee had not yet taken possession, nor was there the slightest manifestation either on his part or on that of Koylash Chunder Roy to injure the manufacture of indigo of the Khalboalcah Concern. Still, however, the factory people thought it injurious to their prestige to permit Koylash Chunder Roy to go without punishment at their hands for acting against their interest. Bands of armed men were collected and posted about Degumberpore to intercept Koylash and bring him in as a prisoner. Koylash was obliged for self-defence to employ and keep in his house armed men also, and not resting upon that alone, he petitioned the Magistrate; but the European was in the latter's estimation a far more credible person than a nigger. So, instead of obtaining the necessary protection which Koylash sought at the hands of the Magistrate, he had the mortification of seeing his house twice searched by the police for armed men. Finding at last that his suit was not at all hearkened to, and also that he was scarcely able to cope with his adversary, he thought

it prudent to transfer the female inmates of his house to that of one of his relatives, and himself availing of a dark night, fled with a few followers to Kishnaghur, taking with him the most valuable of his property.

The Khalboaleah people, baffled in their attempts to secure the person of Koylash, sent without loss of time the shurkewallahs to plunder his now deserted house of whatever they might lay their hands upon therein. All that Koylash had not been able to take away with him, *viz.*, wooden furniture, bedding, wall-shades, as also copper and brass utensils, and the innumerable odds and ends which constitute the necessaries of living of a respectable native, were plundered. The more valuable portion of this plunder was delivered at the factory, while the rest was given to the armed men as their personal share of the general booty. Not content with this even, the doors, doorspots, windows, and wooden railings of the house were removed, so that nothing now remains on the premises but bare brick-walls. The floors were dug up to the depth of three feet for buried money. One would think that Koylash's house was now sufficiently despoiled, and that the work of desolation was to have ended here. But unfortunately for Koylash, it was then the rainy season, and every one is aware that the autumn of 1857 was one of the severest rainy years. Satan or some other of the infernal fraternity whispered into the factory people's ears that the rains would materially assist to bring down the roofs of the doomed house without any expense whatever, and so complete the sentence of destruction, if they would only mind to do it. The arch-fiend never spoke to more willing votaries.

Orders were immediately issued to shut up the drains on the roof of Koylash's house so as effectually to shut out the egress of the rain water—which thus accumulated to the brink of the parapets. Holes were then bored in several places of the roof, which as a matter of course gave way every where except those particular spots where it was the strongest. Koylash Chunder petitioned the Magistrate, and solicited him to proceed to the spot and see whether all that he said was true or not; but with the exception of an order to produce proofs, no other steps were taken. So Koylash Chunder saw no other alternative but to give up;

and knowing that he would hardly be safe in the interior, bought a house in Kishnaghur and there settled himself.

But a Bengalee is mad after his native village. He loves it with all his heart. His parental seat has a secret charm for him which nothing but the funeral pile can burn out from him. Poverty, pestilence, oppression, severally or collectively, are not strong enough to drive him from it nor even unbounded wealth can induce him to make another place his home ; there his forefathers had their enters and exeunts in and from the stage of the world, and there he must follow them—never mind whatsoever may befall him. Twelve months of exile had wrought a change in Koylash's sentiments. He was not sorry that the factory people had treated him with disrespect, for he consoled himself with the thought that his superiors in riches and honour were hardly better treated in the present day by the lowest Europeans and their worse subordinates ; he was not sorry that his goods and chattels had been plundered, for he was in good circumstances yet, and would be able to furnish himself with a new set soon or late. He was not sorry that his house was partially demolished, for that too could be repaired. He was not sorry that he had lost so much money, for like a true Hindu believer in predestination, he consoled himself with the belief that it was in his fate to suffer at this particular time a pecuniary loss. But that which alone afflicted him, and that also which neither money nor any thing else could recompense him for, was the sad thought of being debarred the happiness of living in the house of his forefathers. "I have no home now," said he to himself, and as he saw his neighbouring lodgers in Kishnaghur making preparations to go to their homes on the approaching Doorga Poojah time, tears of sorrow flushed his eye, and he wept over his sad fate. Day after day this sentiment gained strength, and at last his love for home became so imperative, that he forgot all past injuries, and determined at the sacrifice of his best interests to conciliate the factory saheb, and thereby to obtain from him his consent to be allowed to return to his home. With this object in view he sent offers of negotiation, and the answer he received was, that until the concern had the undisputed ijara of his estate, which he had let to Prankishshen Pal, he could not be permitted to set his foot in Degumberpore. Koylash knew that Pran-

kisshen Pal, though a rich man, was a Hindoo, and would sympathise with his feelings, and go to any sacrifice to befriend him. His calculations were correct, for Prankisshen waived all right to the ijara and resigned it to enable Koylash to let it to the Khalboaleah Concern. Koylash thus freed from engagement with the native zemindar, leased out his estate for the space of ten years to the Bengal Indigo Company. He now solicited permission to return to Degumberpore, and the naib of the factory told him that, as the cause of the quarrel was now removed, he was at perfect liberty to go and live in his house, and assured him that no violence whatever would be done to his person. With the view of impressing Koylash with the belief that he was sincere in his protestations of friendship, the naib offered to accompany him to Khalboaleah, and there to bring about an interview with his master, for the purpose of renewing the old good feeling which existed between them.

Led by those assurances, Koylash made preparation for returning home, but did not accompany the naib. The latter, however, immediately after wrote to Koylash from Khalboaleah that he had represented the subject of his interview to his master, and that all differences had been amicably settled, he (his master) will be happy to see him in Khalboaleah. Not doubting the sincerity of this invitation, Koylash at once proceeded to Khalboaleah on the 23rd July 1858, and waited upon the naib. The naib told him that he was very glad to see him, and that he would presently go to inform his master. So saying he left him. Koylash expected every minute that he would be summoned before the saheb, but to his great surprise, after a short time the jemadar of the factory came to him and said that the sahib could not grant him an interview, and that as the concern had been put to much expense by employing armed men and the like, while the dispute lasted with him, it was the order of the saheb that he (Koylash) should pay to the concern a fine of five thousand rupees ; that on payment of the sum he would be allowed to return to his village, and that he must consider himself a prisoner in his hands until the fine was paid. So saying the jemadar marched him off to one of the factory godowns, and there kept him a close prisoner with several ryots suffering the same punishment.

Information of this was sent to the Rajah of Nuddea and several other influential native gentlemen, but they did not think it prudent to inform the Magistrate about it ; for they apprehended that the extreme partiality of Government officials would, without bringing relief to Koylash, only aggravate his hardship. The Magistrate would not either believe such a serious charge against an European, particularly of the Khalboaleah Concern (to which concern Government officials seem excessively partial,) or even in case he should take it up, he would proceed so slowly and in a slovenly way, that the factory would get ample time to remove Koylash from Khalboaleah, and send him from the factory in so short a time that the most vigilant searcher would fail to trace him out. So the Rajah sent his own gooroo, accompanied by a letter of recommendation from Mr. White, to settle with the Khalboaleah saheb. After a great deal of negotiation the factory authorities were kind enough to reduce the fine from five to two thousand rupees, of which, on the immediate payment of one thousand rupees, Koylash was to be liberated, but not to be allowed to return to his house until the remaining thousand was paid. Koylash paid one thousand, and after eleven days of close confinement in an indigo godown, with scarcely any food to subsist upon, he got his release and came back to Kishnaghur.—*Hindoo Patriot*, January 7, 1860.

*To the Editor of "The Indian Field."*

DEAR SIR,—It is a pity that the writer in the *Patriot* has not given the sequel of Koylash Chunder's history. As I know the facts, being then in the district on a pig-sticking excursion, I shall supply the omission. Koylash Chunder subsequently took service in the police to better his means, and was appointed as a naib darogah in the Hauskhally Thannah. Before he was six weeks in the thannah, he was transferred to the Kutwally, under the immediate eye of the Magistrate. No reason was assigned, but it was rumoured that the Khalboaleah people would not suffer Koylash Chunder to remain in the Hauskhally Thannah, where they had large estates, and where they were afraid he might pay them love for love. If the business had ended here, it might have shown discretion on the part of the Magistrate.

Koylash Chunder suspected that something else than discretion had actuated the Magistrate to cause his transfer ; he seems to have been correct in his conjecture. This act of the Magistrate frightened him a good deal ; he thought that his situation in the Police was in jeopardy for being still at variance with the Khalboaleah Concern, and again he thought of making another attempt to make up matters with those people. He heard that the Manager of Khalboaleah Factory was to be a guest in Mr. John White's house at Bansbariah ; and being in the neighbourhood on duty, we took advantage of the occasion to go up personally to that gentleman for the attainment of his object. He thought that he could well trust himself in the house of a third party, where both the laws of hospitality and of gentlemanly conduct would protect him from violent treatment. But he soon found out his mistake.

No sooner was he announced to his old friend, than that gentleman came out with a hunting-whip, and took his long pent-up revenge against the helpless native, whom he did not let off till forced to do so by his host and Mr. Furlong, who came out to know the cause of the uproar created by *their* friend.

Koylash Chunder lodged a complaint before the Magistrate, to whom he related the whole history of his case ; of which no notice was taken, except calling for an explanation from the planter of Khalboaleah, who, much to his credit, did not deny the whipping ! But the cream of the thing was, that a few days after a charge of torture was brought by the planter's people against this native official, when opportunity was taken to turn him out the service !!!

Now if this individual was guilty of the charge brought against him, why was he not committed for trial to the Sessions Court ? In a case of bribery certain facts may come to light, which, though not sufficient in law, might force a moral conviction of the guilt of the offender. In such a case the removal of an official may be both just and expedient, but I cannot understand why a similar course should be taken on a charge of torture. Acts which constitute torture must be known to more than one individual, and if a Magistrate performs his duty as

he ought to do, the offender can never escape the just punishment for his brutal conduct. The present case either implies the incapacity of the Magistrate, or the innocence of the accused.

There has been a good deal of speculation in the native community whether Koylash Chunder's case, as published in the *Patriot*, would attract the notice of the Government, and result in an order for enquiry, as it has ensured one in the case of Seetul Turufdar. Information in the latter case was taken the other day by Mr. Wauchope under an order of the Bengal Government, which it appears has directed him to conduct the enquiry. But is the Bengal Government aware of the antecedents between Mr. Wauchope and Mr. Hampton? Is the Bengal Government aware how Mr. Wauchope conducted himself with the Gossains of Bullaghur when he was Magistrate of Hooghly, and Mr. Hampton, Superintendent of the Sooksaugur Concern? I am afraid the *manes* of Seetul Turufdar will have little satisfaction at Mr. Wauchope's hands.

Yours, &c.,  
A SAXON.

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### No. 6.

## THE GOMASHTA.—A TALE OF INDIGO PLANTING IN NUDDEA.

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Garapota, Shamnuggur, and Boro Choobrey form one Dehee within the factory line of the Bogoola Indigo Factory, which is attached to the Bhajungat Concern of the Khalboaleah estate of the Bengal Indigo Company in the district of Nuddea. When the indigo plant of the season of 1858 had attained some height, the gomashtha of the Bogoola Factory ordered the ryots of the above mentioned Dehee to weed the indigo fields in such a manner that not a single bit of grass or any other kind of weed might be allowed to remain thereon. It is here necessary to mention for the information of such of our readers as are not familiar with the process of a indigo cultivation, that the general practice in such cases is either to root

out or to cut off the bigger weeds, such as the plants *chakoondiah*, *golghosy*, &c., and then to turn out flocks of cattle to graze on the fields for the destruction of the *shama* and other species of grass ; in other words, indigo fields have never been known to require that particular mode of weeding by which Aaos paddy fields are cleared. The gomashtha, in passing the above order, accompanied it with an injunction on his subordinates not to allow the ryots to work on their own paddy fields until the whole of the indigo lands attached to the Dehee had been wooded. The ryots, apprehending the injury which their paddy crops would sustain if the orders of the gomashtha were carried out, offered to come to a compromise with him, and succeeded in settling the matter by promising to pay him 300 Rupees ; on payment of which, it was arranged, the ryots would be allowed to weed the indigo lands in the manner heretofore in use. For the easiest and speediest mode of collecting this sum, the head men of the three villages were directed to allot to the indigo cultivators the amount which, according to the quantity of land cultivated, each man would have to pay as his portion of the above mentioned 300 Rupees, and the head men of the villages were ordered to collect the allotments of their respective villages.

Kaloo Mundul, brother of Ameer Mundul, the head man of Shamnugur, was, during the absence of Ameer Mundul, ordered to collect the cess of his village. But Kaloo demurred, saying that he was ready to pay his own share, and that as he had his own affairs to look after, he was unable to undertake the task of collecting money from the villagers. The gomashtha, however, would admit of no objection, and told Kaloo, that if his personal affairs were indeed of such a pressing nature as not to allow him time for the collection, he had better pay the full amount assessed upon the whole village from his own purse, and then reimburse himself from the villagers at his leisure ; and to see this order fully carried out, the factory subordinates were strictly enjoined not to allow Kaloo Mundul to work on his own fields until he had paid the amount. But Kaloo persisted in his disobedience, and paying his own share into the hands of the factory tagidger, he sent his servants to his paddy grounds. The gomashtha on hearing of this circumstance sent the tagidger back, accompanied by two *shurkewallahs*, with orders to thrash and bring



Kaloo to the factory, bound with cords, as a prisoner. The *Shurke-wallahs* lost no time in proceeding to Kaloo's home, gave him a severe beating, bound his hands tightly behind his back, and were bringing him to the factory. When the party arrived in Garapota, the tagidgeer observed one of the villagers, named Moozdeen Mundul, an old man of rather good circumstances for one of his class, sitting in his house and combing a quantity of *pat*. The tagidgeer asked him why he was at home, and not gone to weed the indigo fields, since the sum allotted to his village had not yet been realized? Moozdeen, in answer, gave him to understand that he had already paid his share to the head men of the village, who were engaged in the collection; and in order to prove his assertion, offered to conduct them to the presence of the head man; upon which one of the peons, through sheer wantonness, caught hold of his beard, and began dragging him away, saying, "Come, old hog, now show us the way to your fathers, the Munduls." The old man, not being able to sustain the violence, fell down in a swoon with his face on the ground, but his persecutors, instead of relenting, treated him with several kicks on his back. The nephew of Moozdeen, seeing all this, ran to the Munduls, who were at that very time holding a meeting for the collection of the gomashtha's cess.

These men had but a moment before heard of the affair relating to Kaloo. The Munduls got incensed, and seeing from the instances already before them—in which two of the most respectable villagers had been grossly insulted and outraged—that no one was safe from such iniquities, resolved not to put up with the occurrence, and regardless of the consequences, they ran to the spot, vowing vengeance on the offenders. As might be expected, they returned the beating on the factory servants with compound interest, and then binding them just as the latter had bound Kaloo, shut them up in a cowfold. After nightfall, when the violence of their rage had subsided a little, the Munduls too late saw that they had gone a little too far, and with the view of compromising the matter, they released their prisoners, and bribed them with five rupees, on the understanding that they were not to mention the circumstance to their saheb or gomashtha. But the tagidgeer and peons had felt themselves too much insulted to think of the foregoing

revenge. So, the moment they got their release, and without even going to the gomashtha, they proceeded to Bhajunghat, and gave to Mr. Tweedie, the superintendent, a most exaggerated story, suppressing, of course, all that they had done to Kaloo and Moozdeen. Next morning Mr. Tweedie, accompanied by about a dozen armed up-country lattials, came to the village, and although the villagers related to him the indignities which they had suffered from the tagidgeer's hands, he heeded them not, but ordered the head men to follow to the Bogoola Factory. The villagers, observing that the tone in which the saheb spoke to them, and judging from a knowledge of antecedents that no good was in store for them, and apprehending that they would be sent by Mr. Tweedie either to Bhajunghat or Khalboaleah, where they were certain of being severely chastised, held a consultation, and determined to fight out the thing and to resist the planter to the best of their might. They accordingly disobeyed Mr. Tweedie's orders, and did not go to Bogoola. The factory people, finding themselves slighted, sent up a petition to the Magistrate, to the effect that the villagers had looted their cutcherry house of Garapota, plundered a large sum of money, and committed violence on the persons of their servants. In this matter the head men of the whole Dehee were named as defendants. In the meantime the services of about fifty professional shurkewallahs from Jessore were engaged, and they were quartered in the neighbouring villages with the intent of waylaying inhabitants of the Dehee, and with the object of looting Garapota, its chief village.

The ryots, notwithstanding their combination, felt themselves too weak to carry on the present dispute with the rich Khalboaleah Concern for any great length of time. They therefore, with the view of inducing some man of wealth and influence to back them, thought of asking the assistance of their neighbouring zemindar, Baboo Brindabun Sircar, of Shihnibash, who at that particular time happened to have fallen out with Mr. Roberts, the superintendent at Khalboaleah. Brindabun Baboo not being then at home, his nephew refused to take the responsibility of openly abetting the ryots; but told them that he would write to the baboo and be guided by his answer. During the interval, Brindabun's nephew did thus much to assist the ryots, that he ordered his

own peons to keep watch around Garapota, and to join the villagers in defending themselves from any attacks that the saheb's people might attempt, but at the same time strictly forbade the peons to show themselves publicly or to enter the village during the daytime. In a few days Bahoo Brindabun returned home, and informed the ryots, that, as he himself was sufficiently occupied with his dispute with the saheb, and more particularly as the district authorities appeared to be favourably inclined towards the planters, he did not think it expedient to meddle in their affair.

The sahebs, on the other hand, after instituting the suit of *loot traj* in the Criminal Court mentioned above, asked the permission of the Magistrate to employ twenty-four men to serve as a body-guard of the gomashtha attached to the Dehee. The Magistrate, without investigating into the matter, or even questioning the propriety of allowing such an unusual number of armed men to locate themselves in behalf of the richer party, and more so in a place where a dispute was existing, granted the request; whereupon the factory proprietors procured two dozen of the most noted shurkewallahs, and with the aid of the police sent them to Garapota in company with their gomashtha.

The ryots could not possibly resist the order of the Magistrate, and were therefore obliged to allow the shurkewallahs to come and take up their quarters in the village. Every resident of the Mofussil knows how annoying is the presence of these men in a village even when they are brought and quartered privately by zemindars and planters on the occasion of a dispute, and it therefore needs not be told the extent to which these twenty-four men carried their mischievous freaks, backed as they believed themselves to be by an order of the Magistrate. The ryots, however, as a last hope, petitioned the Magistrate, explaining to him the real circumstances of the case, and also the pretence under which the sahebs had prevailed upon him (the Magistrate) to permit them to employ notorious shurkewallahs, and solicited him to withdraw the order. They offered at the same time to stand on personal recognisances, and to give bail in assurance of their peaceful intention, and prayed to have the shurkewallahs replaced by an equal number of policemen, if

the Magistrate believed that the indigo planter's interests were in real danger. No attention was paid to this petition. The villagers, now finding their case hopeless, thought it to be their best course to submit and to settle the matter amicably. With that purpose in view, the head men went in a body to Mr. Roberts at Khalboaleah to tender their submission. They there explained to him the reasons which had actuated them in their resistance, and now asked his pardon. Mr. Roberts in reply gave them to understand that they must pay down immediately 300 Rupees as a fine to the Concern before he could grant their request ; and the better and sooner to realise the amount, he ordered every one of them to be shut up in the factory godown until it was paid. The ryots, after much entreaty, obtained permission to send one of their body home for the money. This man came to Garapota, collected the money in the best manner he could, and returned to Khalboaleah with the amount. The fine being paid, the ryots were released.

It will here not be out of place to mention that Koylash Chunder Roy Mohashoy, of Degumberpore, was shut up in the Khalboaleah Factory godown at the same time and place with these men.

But the punishment of the ryots of the Dehee did not end in Khalboaleah, for immediately on their return home, the gomashtha of Bogoola, who was the primary cause of the dispute, demanded from them the three hundred rupees which they had agreed to pay him as weeding subscription money. The ryots this time could do nothing else but pay the amount, and it was then at last that the gomashtha's body-guard, which had been sanctioned by the Magistrate, was withdrawn.—*Hindoo Patriot*, January 14, 1860.

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## PLANTERS *versus* MISSIONARIES.

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PLANTERS AND MISSIONARIES.—The Kishnaghur planters have commenced their biennial campaign against the missionaries, and in the present case the Pulpit certainly gets the better of the Vats.

It would appear that, during his late tour, the ryots at Nuddea presented some petitions to the Lieutenant-Governor, complaining of the grievous oppression they suffered at the hands of the planters. The Lieutenant-Governor paid the greatest attention to these complaints, found out that many of the charges were true, and directed more attention to be paid by the local authorities to grievances of the cultivating classes. The ryots were astonished at, for once, getting justice done them after the lapse of so many years, and have taken into their wicked and turbulent heads to consider whether this piece of justice is consistent with the assertions of the planters, that Government insists upon their sowing indigo against their will. They have long implicitly believed these assertions; they have had carefully pointed out to them on every occasion the great influence the Bengal Indigo Company has exercised on the Bengal Government. They have been induced to believe that for years the Bengal Indigo Company had the nomination of all the Nuddea officials. They have seen how the late Lieutenant-Governor came and spent a week at the Bengal Indigo Company's factories; how he was taken round on an elephant to the scene of some of the greatest outrages that have been committed by a planter; how he acted the part of a hysterical Marius, and laughed with the manager over the ruins of Goaltollee, and admired the indigo that was sown where a few months before a prosperous village had stood. They saw how Deputy Magistrates were removed for endeavouring to prevent planters from taking forcible possession of the fields of the cultivators; they saw their oppressors made Honorary Magistrates, and they were ready enough to believe anything that was told them by designing planters of the orders of Government, and the instructions received by the Magistrates not to interfere to protect them,—and small blame to them. Far be it from us to say, that when they did complain, their cases were not duly enquired into, or that any actual prejudice in favour of the planters was shown by the local authorities; but they dared not complain, and when they did, trained witnesses and hush money to the police were too much for them; for years therefore the ryots of Kishnaghur have lived in a state of sullen, dogged discontent, hating Government, hating the name of Englishmen. They have now complained and have had justice done them; and feel that they have been throughout deceived as to the interest of Govern-

ment in the cultivation of indigo ; they even begin to doubt now whether the late Lieutenant-Governor had the personal interest in the success of the indigo crop that the planters represented him to have. The consequence is, that this year they refuse to sow, unless they are paid a price equal to that which they obtain for rice and other crops. The planters, instead of at once seeing the matter in a proper light, and admitting that like all dogs they have had their day, and that if they want to get on they must henceforth pay honestly for what they want, have commenced to fume and rave at the missionaries, and say—which they know to be false—that designing men have given out that Mr. Grant has issued an order to put a stop to indigo planting. This assertion is a mere cunning attempt to frighten Mr. Grant into the belief that by doing justice he will close all the indigo factories ; they know that he does not want to do this, and, therefore, think that by spreading this report they will induce him to draw back.

The falsehood of this statement is apparent from the very words of those who propagate it. The Kishnaghur correspondent of the *Englishman* says in proof of his assertion, that “some of them have gone to him (Mr. Grant) direct with their petitions—influenced by men who have no desire to see the ryots more prosperous than they are.” Now, if they derive this prosperity from the cultivation of indigo, what have they to *petition* about ? If they really believed that an order had been given to put a stop to indigo cultivation, would they go and petition at all ? If the cultivation of indigo is voluntary, would not they go on sowing until the Police came and prohibited them ? Would even that stop them ? Would it not take a force of about 50,000 men to put a stop to the cultivation of rice for instance ? Are the natives so very anxious to obey the laws of the Government as to give up the cultivation of a remunerative crop merely on a *report* spread by missionaries that the Lieutenant-Governor did not approve of the crop ? If, on the other hand, the cultivation was unpopular, and they believed that the Government had prohibited it, would they petition at all ? Would not they go to the Magistrate of the district and say—“Government has ordered the cultivation of indigo to be stopped ? Mr. Rôd, or Mr. Perch, or Mr. Marlow are going to sow it on our lands, let them be stopped.” The very fact of

the ryots coming direct to Mr. Grant to petition shows that they are under no misapprehension of the description alleged by the planters ; weary of oppression they go to him for relief from that oppression, and finding that they get justice, they determine no longer to be slaves : they have found out that they may sow what crop they like on their own land, and will not therefore sow one which is a dead loss to them.

We trust that the ryots of the whole of Bengal will follow the example of those of Kishnaghur. Two years of pressure will convince the planters that honesty is the best policy, and they will then make up their minds to pay properly for what they want. The last two years have worked a revolution in the condition of the cultivating classes. The high prices of grain and oil seeds have converted half-starved cultivators into prosperous peasant proprietors ; it is only in the large indigo-growing districts that the ryots have not been benefited by this change. Thousands upon thousands of acres of picked land is there taken up with a crop that does not repay the cultivator the cost of seed, tilling, and rent, and this when rice is fetching Rs. 3 per maund. If the whole of this had been at the disposal of the ryots, instead of being locked up, what would not their condition have now been ? As it is, it might just as well have been unreclaimed jungle as far as the interests of the ryots are\* concerned. If the planters must have indigo, they must prepare to pay the highest rate of the most remunerative crop for it ; and not only this, but they must pay something more as recompense for the interference that the cultivation of this crop entails upon the producer, and must further make up their minds to keep their accounts honestly and take fair measure.

But to return to the missionaries. The charge against them is, that one of their body drew up a very excellent petition on behalf of certain ryots, and that this petition called forth from the Lieutenant-Governor enquiries and orders which have undeceived the ryots as to their position as regards the planters. Surely if there was ever one act more becoming the position of a Christian clergyman than another, it would be an act of this sort. The planters, however, to punish him drag him and his private affairs before the public, hold him up to scorn for

his marriage with a native Christian, and question whether his object in marrying was purely spiritual. None but a planter could descend to such a vile course as this for the purpose of silencing a political opponent. Supposing this missionary did marry "a common village girl," what of it? Has he not as much right to marry whom he likes as a planter has? We are very sure of this, that nothing is so likely to make the mission successful as marriage of this sort, which brings the missionaries into immediate contact with the people around them; and we should be glad to hear that all the missionaries had done likewise. What right have the planters to analyse his motives in forming this connection? Why, on earth, should they be purely spiritual any more than those of the planters in marrying a white village girl? If the Kishnaghur correspondent will look around him, he will find that he owes some of his dearest friends not only to village maids, but something very much less respectable and maidenly than village maids and the daughters of ryots. Why is the missionary to be any more spiritual than the fathers of these men? Perhaps it is the fact of marriage that irritates the planters so much.

However, there is nothing new in these petitions; precisely similar petitions possibly drawn up by the same hand were presented by the ryots to Mr. Halliday when he made his first tour as Lieutenant-Governor: they were never even unfolded, and therefore the natural acts of the ryots were not attributed to designing men, as they would have been had he acted upon these.

As the planters have declared war, we hope that the missionaries will take the matters up, and let the public know what the indigo system is in Kishnaghur.—*Indian Field*, December 10, 1859.

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NUDDEA PLANTERS.—We give below a letter from Mr. Bomwetsch, the Missionary of Kishnaghur, with reference to the attacks which have been made upon him by the planters. Mr. Bomwetsch has come forward in his own name, and has stated his case manfully, temperately, and as becomes a Christian missionary. Let the Kishnaghur planters now do



the same, and the matter will then be brought to a fair issue. Mr. Bomwetsch's great crime is, as we supposed, the having undeceived the ryots as to their legal obligation to sow indigo for the planters against their will, and having exposed the deception which the Kishnaghur planters have so long and successfully practised of persuading the ryots that the head of the Government is personally interested in the cultivation of indigo. The ryots see that the little family combination of Magistrates, Collectors, and Local Managers is scattered ; they have actually made themselves heard by Government, and to their great astonishment have received justice at the hands of the highest authority ; it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they should have the "*unparalleled insolence*" to begin to discuss openly whether it is possible, after all, that there is no real law making them the bondsmen of the planters, and that they have the right to dispose of the property at the market price, and to whom they like. Mr. Bomwetsch has with him the feeling of every honest man in the country. The planters may bluster as they may, and intrigue and concoct what plans they like in the backslums of Mission Row, "or at Planters' Diggings," the time has come when they must pay or go : they have two alternatives—to open their purses, or shut their factories.

"DEAR SIR,—Before that indigo planter of Kishnaghur (*i. e.* of the Nuddea district) sent that letter of his to the *Englishman*, I was told by another planter, who had seen it in manuscript, that he would do so. But I never took the trouble to send for the *Englishman* in order to read it, as I could well guess from the man's former writing against missionaries, that, besides a few gross misstatements and some falsehoods, which no body would believe, and a vehement and libellous attack on my honour as a man or as a Christian, he would have very little to say for himself and his brother-oppressors ; and this, I was sure, could not hurt me, but only harm him and his blue cause ; for I was, from the manner people spoke to me of the letter, under the impression that the planter had signed his name and given mine also. But from your remarks on it, I see the designing planter has not done so. Nor am I less surprised to find that the charges, ridiculous as they partly are, are actually believed, and that in quarters where I least expected it ; and that I am blamed for

having over-stepped my line. And, although you do not think so, but would—as all right-thinking and merciful people would—even encourage me, still as the charges are so entirely false, and as the designing planter wants thereby even to reflect discredit on the Commissioner and Lieutenant-Governor, I think it right to contradict them; for, although I shall ever consider it my duty to assist these so cruelly oppressed people, I shall always do it in a way becoming my position as a missionary. Above all, I shall never try—as is hinted at—to get at the authorities in a dishonest, round-about way; but shall act in a straightforward manner.

*First.*—As to my having spread the report that “ Mr. Grant had issued an order to put a stop to indigo planting:” it is a designed falsehood.

*Secondly.*—As to my having sent any ryots to the Lieutenant-Governor, or even to the Commissioner: ditto.

*Thirdly.*—As to my having ever written, or dictated, any petition to the Lieutenant-Governor or the Commissioner: ditto.

*Fourthly.*—As to the affair of Gobindpore, near Hauskhally, I mean the affair of Mr. White, I am not only innocent, but was entirely ignorant of it, until, a few weeks ago, a planter himself gave me a full account of it. I had never so much as heard of it. Only this much can I now say, that, had the Commissioner and the Lieutenant-Governor heard the account, it would have evoked still more stringent measures than the case has already done; and young Mr. White would now, in all probability, share the fate of his servants. As it stands, the planters laugh at the ryots, and boast, even in the face of the missionaries, of always coming out clean of the most flagrant cases; and the ryots are kept under the impression that the Magistrates are their avowed enemies and the warmest friends of the planters.

But to come to the confession of my grievous sin committed against the indigo planters. What I have done is simply this: some months ago I went, in open daylight, to Mr. Reid, the Commissioner, then at

Kishnaghur, to plead with him on behalf of the cruelly oppressed people of two villages within my former mission district. But I did not do so ; with the intention of sending the people to him, for they had already prepared a petition to him, but *lacked courage to go up to him*, and at the same time despaired of getting justice at all. But what brought the people to me, and what induced me to speak to Mr. Reid, I must tell you in a separate letter. For the present I will merely make my confession. On behalf of two other villages in my former mission districts I wrote a letter to Mr. Reid. But I did not send the people to the Commissioner ; *they were already on their way to him*, and without my knowledge of their previous intention. Moreover, I have given no letter to any one. People are constantly coming through here on their way to the Commissioner or the Lieutenant-Governor, all without my previous knowledge of their intention, and want letters to Mr. Reid and Mr. Grant ; but I steadfastly refuse, telling the people it was not necessary ; justice would be done to them without it. That these people want letters is nothing out of the way ; every one who has lived only a few years in this country will comprehend it.

A third grievous sin that I committed against the planters is this : the people before going to Calcutta asked me whether I was sure that there did not exist, *after all, a secret law, according to which they would be obliged or forced to sow indigo against their will* ? I assured them the law was righteous and in their favour : no one could compel them to sow indigo against their own will. And when the people wanted to know whether the new Governor was a man like the old one, that is, *whether he had shared in indigo*, and whether he was the friend of the planters, &c., &c., I positively answered in the negative, telling them, in the oriental fashion, that he was justice himself, and would not overstep the straight path a hairsbreadth, either to the right or to the left ; and that, if from any one, they could expect justice from him, and also from the Commissioner. I am sure I have not given a false impression to the people. The people also know very well that indigo cultivation will not cease ; only they want to be at liberty to sow when they please, and where they please ; and to sell it to that factory that pays most for it. *They won't be slaves any longer.* Nay, they are much less than

slaves. And I confidently do hope and pray, that our noble Governor will not lay down his reign before he has emancipated the ryot-slaves of Bengal, and depart this country with the blessings of millions of alleviated sufferers following him, and not both the curses of the oppressed as well as the abuses of the oppressors alike, as in the case of our late Governor. How true it is that "No one can serve two masters," No man can be just and unjust at the same time, nor earn the applause of both parties, the righteous and the unrighteous. If you will give this a place in your columns as early as possible, you will greatly oblige

Yours faithfully,  
C. BOMWETSCH."

*Santipore, 22nd December.*

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We have satisfaction in being able to support so many of our charges against the planters by the unbiassed evidence of a Christian clergyman, a man who has come out to pass his life in peacefully benefiting his native neighbours, a man who *can* have no prejudices against the planters, and whose profession is an ample guarantee for the truth of his statements. If the planters *will* persist in denying the oppressive nature of their system in opposing all reform, and in vilifying, by means of a paid agent and a purchased press, all those who endeavour to remedy the great evil, the only thing that remains will be a Commission of Enquiry for the purpose of ascertaining how far these allegations are true, and how far false. Are the planters prepared for this? we trow not.—*Indian Field*,  
*December 31, 1859.*

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*To the Editor of "The Indian Field."*

DEAR SIR,—Now kindly permit me to tell you what occasioned my interceding for the poor ryots of Howlia and Pathorghata. When I lived at Solo, one of the stations of the C. M. Society, my congregation, consisting of nearly a thousand souls, was dispersed all over the neighbouring villages, amongst which were the above named. I was every thing to the helpless people around me, not only to Christians, but also to Hin-

doos and Mussulmans. But above every thing they valued the protection I always afforded them against *neeler dourdtina* (Indigo-oppressions); because, although I was not able, neither did I try, to do overmuch for them, still they were always preserved from ruin.

Six years ago I had to leave the station for Europe, and after my return had to take up Santipore as my station; and often since have I thanked God for having got me out of the way of Indigo planting, all the troubles it entailed on me, and the grief I had to suffer, while daily obliged to witness the most cold-blooded oppression the poor people have to endure from a set of men *whose consciences have been eaten by the cancer of covetousness*, "*the root of all evil*," and who call themselves (as one of them wrote to me) "*a set of Christian gentlemen*." Now, about five or six months ago, I was called upon by my Society to go up to Bollobhpore and my old station Solo, to use my influence with the Christians, in order to prevent the unsteady and ignorant amongst them from joining the Roman Catholic priest, who tried to entice them away.

While staying there the people of Howlia and Gowalparra came in a mass, imploring my assistance against "*Indigo oppression*," which they said had reached its highest pitch, and was sufferable no longer. I was much grieved to be obliged to tell them I could do nothing for them. But what sorrow and depression I felt on beholding the poverty of the people and the desolation of the once at least comparatively prosperous villages, I am unable to describe to you. One village especially I could hardly recognise at all. The first greehastas (villagers) I found either ruined or at the brink of ruin: as to the common peasants, they are starving with their families. If my heart had been but of stone, it would have burst at seeing and hearing what I then saw and heard. Still I never dreamt of doing any thing towards alleviating the sufferings of these, well knowing that, besides the little assistance which I could afford while living among them, all other efforts would prove vain; for what the people want is protection against outrages committed on them when *unwilling to receive advances*. Thus the only thing to be done was, afresh to cry up to God in heaven for relief, which we have done in regular prayer meetings for the purpose. The Hindoos in their way

celebrate poojah against the evil, and the Mussulmans make *námáz*, and say now it was all in vain, and we often thought so too. But all that happens—if we have read history to some purpose at all—is either ordered, or at least permitted by God, and always for a certain purpose : and prophecies must needs be fulfilled, even those pronounced by Deputy Collectors. Mr. Ausberrz, a Deputy Collector, who is one of the most efficient Government servants in his line, after his first tour through the district, when he called on me at Solo, told me (I could give his words in quotation) *"I had better go away from this district, as I would never succeed in doing any thing in the way of preaching."* When I asked for his reason for saying so, he said, *"as long as the plunters are here, no one will listen to you,"* and then gave me a description of the cruel oppression exercised by my co-religionists, that *"set of Christian gentlemen,"* and said that *"within ten years the whole district would be pauperised."* He also told me he had written to Government on the subject, and would write again. But ten years ago who dared to say any thing against these Christian gentlemen, and what Government would dream of listening to what either a Deputy Collector or a Judge (of Mr. Sconce's standing) said ? But the prophecy of Mr. Ausberrz has been fulfilled, although it is now eleven years since the prediction was uttered ; and the pauperised ryots have had the impertinence of reminding Government of it. Government cannot but hear, and soon I hope the glorious time will come, when the ryots will sell their indigo, and get their due for it as well as for rice, linseed, or any other crop.

But to return to my own case :—After I had returned home for about two months, about twenty ryots of Howlia and Gowalpara came to me from Lagachiparra (the zemindars of which place, their real landlords had rented out those villages to the Nischindipore Firm), saying that now for fourteen days they had been imploring their original and real zemindars on their knees to take the land away from Mr. Forlong. But, the ten years of izara not having expired, they could not possibly do so, and the zemindars and ryots agreed that I should be entreated to represent their case to the Magistrate ; and as I had already made up my mind to go up to Kishnaghur, I promised the poor people to speak to the Magistrate. In the mean time, however, the people had agreed, or

rather the zemindars (who came to see me) had advised them to petition the Commissioner. This occasioned my calling on Mr. Reid. But if at the time I had known that other villages had already petitioned the Commissioner and Lieutenant-Governor, I think I would not have gone to Mr. Reid, from fear of being suspected of having anything to do with the ryot movement already in motion, since I should have been well aware that the planters would readily avail themselves of the opportunity of saying that the whole of the movement had been designed by the Missionaries.

But suppose even I had spoken to the Commissioner with the intention of helping on the good movement, of which again I affirm I was totally ignorant, have I not a right to call on the Commissioner, or Magistrate, or any other officer I choose, and to speak to him what I please, as long as he permits me to do so, considering moreover that I am an entirely private person? Nor am I, as is very well known, a selfish proselytizer. What then, I ask, *could be* my motives in speaking to the Commissioner, except to relieve, if possible, poor helpless sufferers? And if this be unworthy of my vocation as a Clergyman and a Missionary, I must afresh learn what my duties are.

Do the planters mean to assert that they only have a *right to call on, to dine, to play, and lodge with Judges, Collectors, Magistrates, and Deputy Magistrates*? Nay, is it not very unjust in these officials to receive planters at all, *men who continually are accused, before the self-same officials, of the most heinous crimes committed under the sun, and who have, without interval, not dozens, but hundreds of cases pending in the Courts*? Here lies the secret of the evil. Hence the poor ryots, who for so many, many years are groaning under the cruel yoke of planters, cannot, on any account, find justice at the hands of the authority. I do not mean to say that all Magistrates and Judges do always wilfully pervert justice (although I will another time give some instances even of this), but they are either bought or sold by the planters (about this too another time), or, what is more frequently the case, owing to constant friendly private intercourse with them, and an innate hatred of the "niggers," they, more or less unconsciously, are

unduly prejudiced in favour of the first, and against the latter, with whom they have—in some instances that I could mention—no intercourse whatsoever, except officially in court, and then even only mostly with the worst specimens, and not immediately but intermediately through a set of corrupt amlahs. These charitable excuses, however, it must be considered, more apply rather to common *mokhadommas* between the planters and natives, than to our present case ; for, although the ryots state their grievances, it is not because they want the planters to be punished ; but they simply crave the protection of Government against the outrages committed on them by the planters for insisting on selling their indigo as they do any other produce of their lands. And this protection, although theoretically granted, has been until now in practice positively refused to them ; nay, the people were frequently worse off after complaint than before. For hear how those people, I have pleaded for, fared. The Darogah came (the people said bribed by the factory), wanting by all means to compel them to come to an agreement with the planter ; but seeing them altogether unwilling, he at last consented to write a report on the condition of getting Company's Rupees 300. Somehow or other he did after all not write a report. The Joint Magistrate of Kareempore too came according to the Commissioner's order, but not to their village. He spent a jolly day in the factory, whence he called the ryots, telling them they should come to an agreement with the planter. And when the people insisted on telling him their grievances, he forbade them to tell him any thing except what had happened during the last month. They told him that during the last month nothing had happened, but that they had been running about to get protection, which, as they now could see, had been in vain, and went away. When the planter heard that the people had again tried to get justice, he at last (knowing that a Missionary was backing the people) thought it prudent to put on the "Christian gentleman," and went to or called for the few Christians that live in these two villages, telling them that he was their (Christian) brother : he had not been aware of their living there, and was glad to have found it out ; henceforth they should *have to sow* very little indigo, and that he would make a *girja* for them, &c., and gave every one a rupee, and all of them a *khanna*, and as they were encouraged to accept of it by a feeble



Missionary, they left their Hindoo and Mussulman brethren in the lurch. And lest any of them should be able to complain again, the two villages were surrounded by a host of lattials, and the two *parrahs* were prevented from communicating with each other. The leader amongst them, an inhabitant of a third village (Treehut), was by lattials kept a prisoner in his own house. This news was brought to me by a man who during the night had escaped. He begged very hard of me not to leave them in the lurch like the few selfish Christians had done, and to write a letter with my own hand, saying I would not do so, or else all would lose courage. But since for good reasons I could not do so, the man went away, evidently under the impression that I despaired of doing any thing more for them. The last account I heard was, that the abovenamed head man at last was taken to the factory, and ultimately yielded to an offer of employment. The people are again frightened into the belief that it is a criminal offence in the sight of Government to groan under the heavy yoke of the planters.

As to the Patharghata people, I heard from a Missionary that about a hundred lattials are collected at Khidoypore, ready at any moment to loot their village. But the people are determined to secure protection, but when they saw that the Magistrate would not do any thing for them, they insisted on petitioning the Commissioner once more, and when they heard from the amlahs (true or false, I can't say, for aught I know the planters' friend in disguise may have spread the report), that the Magistrate was a friend of Mr. Forlong, and had written to the Commissioner in favour of the planters and against the ryots, they at once were determined to go right up to the Lieutenant-Governor. I strongly dissuaded them from doing so, telling them, as long as the Commissioner and the Magistrate did not positively refuse to grant them protection, they should not take this step. But the men said, "we are now for months running about praying for protection, and do not yet dare venture to return to our homes from fear of being captured and carried we do not know where to." Two men of their village had already been taken away; against many of them false cases had been instituted in another Division, in order to take them away, under that pretence, many, many miles off their houses to the Kareepore Magistrate, whom they knew, from how he had

acted toward the Howlia and Goalpara people, to be a thorough friend of the planters, and an enemy to the ryots. What the people are now doing I do not know, as for a long time I have neither seen nor heard any thing of them, having been travelling about in tent. My time is up, another time more.

Yours faithfully,

C. BOMWETSCH.

*In Camp, 8th January, 1860.*

## THE INDIGO CONTEST AND ITS ISSUE.

THE advocates of the existing system of indigo-planting in lower Bengal are endeavouring to envelope the real question in masses of irrelevant statements and specious fallacies. The contest between the planter and the ryot is at one time ascribed to "antagonism of race," at another to the "inherent treachery" of the Bengalee. By one it is described as the result of the machinations of the zemindar, who is jealous of the presence of an influential and intelligent witness of his tyrannies; by another as a necessary consequence of the existence of a covenanted civil service; and by a third as the immediate fruit of bad judicature. Reasons much more recondite are offered by speculators more ingenious; one only is never mentioned—apparently because it happens to be the true one—namely, that in Lower Bengal indigo-planting does not pay the cultivator.

And how can it pay? A few facts illustrative of indigo-planting finance will convince our readers that it is hopeless to expect the ryot to voluntarily undertake a cultivation so ill-requiting as indigo cultivation in Lower Bengal has been made to be. He can scarcely be expected to be very enthusiastic in the cause of the development of the country's resources, when he sees that that enthusiasm can lead only to ruin and starvation.

First then—we are speaking of indigo-planting in Nuddea—an advance of two rupees is given for every beegah to be cultivated with

indigo. The beegah is measured out by servants of the factory, and by a well-understood rule, which forms a part of the system, is made equivalent to a biggah and half of ordinary measurement. Two rupees, or four shillings, are advanced for the cultivation of half an acre of land. This is the immense "assistance" which the ryot receives from the factory, and which, if we are to believe factory historians, places him above the reach of want, starvation, and the money-lender for a whole year.

Next comes the question, how much land is each ryot to cultivate with indigo? That too is decided by the consuetude of years. A ryot who owns one plough and a pair of oxen is to cultivate four beegahs of factory measurement, and so on in proportion. The burden thus distributed, heavy as it is, would have been borne if the burthened had been allowed to carry it their own fashion. But no. The soil must be worked upon without interruption from Maugh to Choit, until a few showers of rain render it fit for the reception of the seed. During this part of the season, the ryot is not allowed to look on the right side or the left, to attend to his other lands or crops, to work any otherwise but on the marked land.

The plants come to have four leaves. Weeding, a process which in the earlier days of indigo-planting was never used, and which all ryots protest is not necessary to the extent to which it is now required to be carried, commences. The ryot must again suspend all other avocations of life to attend to the carrying out of this *idea* till Joist. Suppose the man farms ten beegahs, and owns one plough and a pair of oxen. If he had been left to himself he would probably have cultivated his six beegahs of indigo, while preparing his remaining four beegahs for the paddy crop. We do not exactly say that this last he does not do, for the staff of life must be secured, and the customary presents to the factory officials obtain him the privilege of looking to his paddy lands.

A beegah of indigo land requires, in the parlance of the field, twenty ploughs, which cost, say at two annas a plough, 2 rupees 8 annas. The weeding costs a rupee; the seed another. The reaping and carriage cost at least 8 annas. And then there is the rent of the land, which may be

fixed at one rupee and four annas. Thus a beegah of indigo cultivation costs at the minimum 6 rupees and 4 annas. Now, take the other side of the page. A cart-load of the plant is—by the same law of modern consuetude—accounted one bundle. The chain of three cubits is gone out of date. The produce of each beegah is now ordinarily estimated at five or six of such bundles, and in the best season does not exceed eight. The price paid by the factory is, as Mr. Forlong attests, six bundles the rupee. The whole crop of a beegah, therefore, sells on an average for a rupee. The cost to the ryot, as we have seen, is six rupees and four annas. Thus arises a loss of five rupees and four annas on every beegah, or twenty-one rupees to the owner of each plough.

Thus stands the main account. If the items be true—and we challenge our readers to disprove their accuracy—the system which makes such transactions possible must be pronounced atrociously oppressive. And so it is felt to be by the ryots. But there are incidental to indigo planting, as practised in Bengal, other evils, the sum total of which constitute one of the most elaborately organized systems of creating and inflicting misery that could be conceived. The planter is usually a farmer of the lands on which his factory lies and the plant is grown. Planter farmers pay enormous rents to their zemindars, in some instances more even than the ascertained rental receivable from the ryots. This the planter can afford to give, because he thereby acquires over the ryots an influence which is convertible into immense profits. The planter, however, seldom fails to add his izardaree—farmer's allowance. He then rack-rents the ryot more than the most oppressive zemindar can do. The planters sometimes cultivate the plant on their own account. There are factories with hundreds of beegahs of neez cultivation which do not keep a single plough of their own. The ryots must furnish ploughs, cattle, and labour, of course not on the most remunerative rates, if any, of hire.

The outrages reported to have been committed at Lokenathpore and Kalapanee are merely incidental manifestations of a spirit which we now plainly see, but of the existence of which we had no idea when the missionaries petitioned Parliament. They then said that rebellion was

possible in Bengal. We disbelieved it. We thought there was no end to patience of our countrymen, and a stout one to Anglo-Saxon rapacity. We have now learnt better. The note no doubt sounded strong when the ryots of Kalapanee shouted "out with the English." It was rebellion. But who dare catch it—hold it?

The Government of Bengal is already being taxed with the three letters it has written. We yet hope Mr. Grant will have the pluck to fight the fight out.—*Hindoo Patriot, March 3, 1860.*

### NUDDEA PLANTERS.

*To the Editor of "The Indian Field."*

DEAR SIR,—I had already another letter ready for the *Field*, a few personal words to Mr. Furlong; but in such a serious affair as the present, where the welfare of millions is concerned, minor points must yield to the one great object in view, *which, again I would press it, is not "to make the sowing of indigo optional."* For who ever doubted it was not? The law does not permit any zemindar, Native or European, to throw down some six or ten rupees to the advance-hating ryots' feet, and if unwilling to pick them up, to compel them to do so with the horsewhip, and then to enter their names into his book as being under contract, and then measure away their best lands, (and almost always by a false measure,) one-third more than was nominally agreed to, and then under pretence of contract to make them work for him all the year round, and pay them next to nothing, or, as it happens in bad seasons, to keep their names down for arrears. What law on the face of the earth would countenance such foul proceedings? *At least the English law does not, and never will; for the English people can never will to have it so.* All that law-talk is to no purpose, or, if to any, merely to blind the eyes of the public at home, as Mr. Underhill, a Secretary of the Baptist Mission Society, has done; and to keep the good and well-disposed English people living scattered in this country, but not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of indigo planting, under the false impression as if the ryots gave endless troubles to the planters by not

fulfilling their contracts. *The one great object in view is, to procure protection for those ryots who are not willing to take advances.* And for this purpose no new law or regulation is necessary, but new, or so to speak, renewed Magistrates, men unprejudiced, unbiassed, and just, and who "strain every nerve to bring" the numerous cases of looting, beating, kidnapping, false imprisonments, and murder "home to the offenders," even to the planters (I always feel sorry for some well-disposed men amongst them). One would have thought that, after the Lieutenant-Governor's own vigorous efforts, things would come round to a healthful state. But no such thing. Until now his exhortations and reprimands have, with two exceptions, (to the praise of Mr. Tottenham and Mr. Dwarkanath Dey be it said,) been in vain. "The cases, which are known to be of daily occurrence, in which ryots are kidnapped and imprisoned, and carried from place to place by zemindars and planters, with impunity, are—*still*—" a disgraceful blot upon the district administration in Bengal." Nay, impunity must be speedily growing and ripening into a fierce feeling of bitter revenge, when a planter dares to horsewhip a Government officer ! The report about the lattials mentioned in my last letter is but too true. Some hundreds of lattials and spearmen are at this moment assembled to loot the villages of Pathorghatta, Gobindopore, and Maliaputta or Chandrabash, because the ryots still refuse to take advances or to enter into contract with the planter, lest they should have him say they had not kept the contract. Many villages petitioned the Magistrate again and again, implored the Commissioner over and over again, humbly beseeched even the Governor himself, to grant them protection from the persecutions of the planters ; but instead of obtaining any remedy, have afresh been mercilessly delivered into the hands of their oppressors. Since the above was written I have received a letter from Kishnaghur, the civil station, informing me that ryots had come into the station, having their whole substance, ploughs, &c., packed on carts, "to seek for protection," and remained near the cutcherry for days without any redress. How they have left these quarters, and what has been done on their behalf, is not known. The ryots are more than ever impressed with the idea that the confederacy between planters and Magistrates (both covenanted and uncovenanted) was an inseparable one. But my time being nearly up, I must

come to the point I wish to gain, if possible to save the above named villages from destruction and the poor people from utter ruination. I humbly trust my letter will attract the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor, and that he will secure protection for these people by most stringent measures.

Mr. Lincke, of Bollobhpore, who lives amongst those people, writes (16th January 1860) to Mr. Stern, my fellow labourer at Santipore, as follows :—"The people in the threatened villages are sore afraid, and those who can have their wives, children, and cattle sent away to other places. Those persons who remain cannot get out of their villages for fear of being caught and carried off. To several of whom it has happened so. Several of the villages have given in, and I believe only two or three in this neighbourhood are still holding out, and these are the villages which are threatened with being looted. I wonder how it will end. I am afraid all return to *as it was before*. Nothing good for the people will result."

Two lads of 18 and 19 years, pupils of our Training Institution, were expressly sent to my tent in order to tell me what they had seen and heard themselves, as they have only just now returned from their vacation, which they spent at Bollobhpore. They say those quarters look quite warlike. The contemplated loot had not yet taken place, because the planter's lattials were sore afraid of the villagers, who were determined to give them fierce battle. They had divided themselves into at least six different companies. One company consists merely of bowsmen. Another of slingsmen, like David of old. Another company consists of brickwallas, for which purpose they have even, as I hear, collected the scattered bricks about my old compound. Another company consists of balewallahs. Their business is merely to send the hard unripe bale-fruit at the heads of the planter's lattials. Again, another division consists of thalwallahs, who fling their brass rice-plates in a horizontal way at the enemy, which does great execution. Again, another division consists of rolawallahs, who receive the enemy with whole and broken well-burned earthen pots. The Bengal women do at times great execution with this weapon. One afternoon the planter's

lattials fled in confusion, when they saw the Solo women march out thus armed. Again, another division have to play the lattee. And the fiercest division is the company of judhishtheer, as they called it, who are the so-called shorke-wallabs or spearsmen. This company consists only of twelve men, but considering that at one time one good marksman, who had the spears reached to him by others, chased one hundred lattials, their number though numerically small is still formidable. And these are the men that the lattials fear most, and frightened by them, they have not yet ventured on an attack.

Now I ask you, is this not a sad state of things? And who will have to answer for the consequences? The missionaries or Mr. Furlong with his co-labourers and the Magistrates? I could write a good deal more of what the above young men told me, but the dawk moonshee is waiting for me.

Believe me, dear Sir,  
Yours faithfully,  
C. BOMWETSCH.

*Ranaghat, in Camp, 25th January, 1860.*

[The following is a truthful and vivid portray of "both sides of the (Indigo) Question," and notwithstanding the facetious humour in which it has been conceived and certain personal allusions contained in it, it will enable the reader to better form his opinion on the subject than mere one-sided statements.—*Compiler.*]

**BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION.**—Having received information of the highly inflammatory and incendiary conversation which has of late prevailed at the Bengal Club, and of conspiracies and plottings amongst turbulent Anglo-Saxons, which if unchecked will result in insurrection



and anarchy, we have employed a Ferazee kidmutgar, of that refuge for the destitute, to act as special correspondent at what may now be fairly called the seat of War. Between our own correspondent and the *Englishman's* special mendacity-monger at Kishnaghur, the public will be placed *au fait* with both sides of the question. Through the intelligence, ability, and assiduity of our black Mr. Russell, we are enabled to lay before our readers a conversation that lately took place there.

*Time—Tuesday, the 6th March, 11 A. M.—Place, Bengal Club.*

*A very Cool Civilian sipping iced water.*

*To him a huge "starved-out Indigo planter," flushed and panting, and looking uncommonly like a hot hind-quarter of Elephant.*

*Cool Civilian.*—Hullo ! Vats, you look hot and excited, and I do not see that amiable smile for which you are so celebrated. What's the matter ? Where have you been ?

*Representative Indigo Planter.*—Hot ! excited ! been ! how can you ask ? Why, to our Association of course.

*C. C.*—Ass, how much ?

*R. I. P.*—The Planters' Association ; what other Association could I go to ?

*C. C.*—Oh ! I see, but I thought that the Association was poor Theobald ; and that upon his being muzzled with a Supreme Court appointment and a regularly paid salary, the Association had vanished into the thinnest and most rarified air.

*R. I. P.*—Oh ! no, you are altogether wrong ; we have started again afresh. We are going to call ourselves the Agricultural and Commercial Association.

*C. C.*—What a taking name ! but you are surely not going in for rice and tobacco, either wholesale, retail, or for exportation— are you ?

Why do you call yourselves the agri-commerci-cum-indigo Association, or whatever it is?

*R. I. P.*—How green you Civilians are. No, why should we go in for rice or any thing but indigo; the name is a dodge: we want to enjoy the luxury of a paid agitator; a particular friend of ours, moreover, wants a comfortable little berth, as he cannot, from circumstances over which he has no control, poor fellow, rejoin his old appointment at little Pedlington; but at the same time we cannot afford to pay a Secretary, as Theobald will tell you; so we have stuck in the "Agricultural" to try and get hold of a few zemindars to help pay for our agitator, and the "Commercial," as a matter of course, to nobble Wilson.

*C. C.*—Capital! but does it not strike you that the zemindars could no more combine with you than oil with water? You will have a split in a week.

*R. I. P.*—Oh! that's all right; we do not want the zemindars, but their money; we get a year's subscription in advance, and the niggers may then go to the——dogs.

*C. C.*—The plan does credit to your head and heart. It is as ingenious as it is ingenuous (*aside*—but very little of either). Who is this paragon of a Secretary you have got? Is Dickens coming out?

*R. I. P.*—No, we have got Forbes, late of the *Dacca News* and the Dacca Bank.

*C. C.*—Oh! and late of the Colonization Committee and of——!

*R. I. P.*—Stop! Stop! that's enough; the identity is fully established. He is just the man for us in these difficult times: we want a fellow capable of asserting our claims in a powerful manner, and with brass enough to stick up for us against all our enemies, who are becoming rather numerous.

*C. C.*—Well, if rash and unscrupulous assertion, and the boldest assurance—to express myself mildly—is what you want—and it is difficult to

conceive what else you can want—why, I agree with you he is just the very man for you, as his evidence before the Colonization Committee will vouch.

*R. I. P.*—Come, you need not rake up the past. He went home to give evidence, and you do not suppose he was going to take the trouble for nothing ; after all he was not worse than Wise, our President.

*C. C.*—Possibly not, but—well, never mind—what have you been doing to-day at your Association ?

*R. I. P.*—Doing, why we have settled John Peter's hash for him.

*C. C.*—John who ? Oh ! I understand, you mean the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

*R. I. P.*—Yes, if you like to call him so, but he won't be that much longer ; wait till Wilson sees our petition.

*C. C.*—Indeed ! what's it about ? You surely have not been committing yourselves on paper regarding this awful rising of the ryots, said to be all owing to a letter of the Lieutenant-Governor's ?

*R. I. P.*—Of course we have ; why, all Bengal is in a state of insurrection—factories burnt down, drums beat, a planter's assistant left for dead on the field, &c.

*C. C.*—Who tells you this ? I believe it to be all false.

*R. I. P.*—Have you not seen it in the *Englishman* positively asserted ?

*C. C.*—Yes, of course, I have.

*R. I. P.*—Well, is that not sufficient evidence of its truth ?

*C. C.*—To speak plainly, I could desire no more convincing evidence of its falseness.

*R. I. P.*—Well, Forbes, our Secretary, says, he believes it.

*C. C.*—And do you believe Forbes ?

*R. I. P.*—Of course I do, generally.

*C. C.*—If that's the case, we will say no more about it. By the bye, what was the planter's assistant doing on the field upon which he was left for dead ? Is it not true that he went with a body of armed lattials to mark out, for indigo sowing, fields of certain ryots who warned him off quietly and respectfully, but who, on the planter's assistant trying to thresh them into compliance, turned the tables and threshed him ?

*R. I. P.*—Well, I did hear something of this sort.

*C. C.*—Do you attribute that to the Lieut.-Governor's letter ? And did you never hear of such things in the time of your old friend Halliday ?

*R. I. P.*—Yes, little accidents sometimes happened. I can't exactly say how that particular case is connected with Grant's letter, but I know very well that in Halliday's time we should very soon have taught the black scoundrels that they had no right to interfere with the development of the resources of the country. Now we are afraid to touch the brutes ; we should have that villainous nigger Press pitching into us, and the Magistrates moreover are now afraid to let us off, and walk it into the ryots as they used to do, or they would have Grant pitching into them with some of his ridiculous theories of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

*C. C.*—Well, so much for the dead assistant : the simple fact is, he went to wallop his niggers, and his niggers walloped him. Now what should you do if a lot of natives—or Europeans for the matter of that—were to come and cut holes in your garden and measure it, and on being asked what they wanted, say they were going to sow flax in it ?

*R. I. P.*—Do ! why, break their heads of course ; what else could I do ?

*C. C.*—Well, then, what else could the ryots do under the same circumstances? They have as much right to defend their property from intruders as you have.

*R. I. P.*—What humbug! Black devils! What right have they to talk of their property? You know what Sir C. Jackson says of such cant. Why, when we were Honorary Magistrates in Halliday's time—

*C. C.*—Steady! We will come to that presently. Now as to the drum-beating, did ryots never beat drums before Grant ascended the guddee? and has any body been hurt by the drums?

*R. I. P.*—Of course they can beat drums if they like, but they did it to chaff the planters—a regular case of insurrection.

*C. C.*—Oh! this is what you mean by insurrection, now I understand. The ryots chaff you, and that is all that this row is about.

*R. I. P.*—And bad enough too: the planters are said to be sending their families away from the districts.

*C. C.*—The *Englishman* says so, and perhaps your Secretary, Mr. Forbes, says so; but it by no means follows that it is true: however, it is quite possible that the planters may be in a fright; they are apt to get alarmed whenever their ryots show a spirit of independence. I always supposed that guilty consciences had a good deal to do with this feeling; they must know that if they ever do drive the ryots into active opposition, the reckoning will be a heavy one.

*R. I. P.*—Well, I give up the demi-moribund assistant and the drums; but how about that row at Ourangabad, where the ryots drove a planter and the Police out of the field, and threatened to drive the British out of India, and said it was "Company ka hukum?" That clearly can be traced to Grant's letter.

*C. C.*—Why, before I answer this, first tell me how you suppose that the ryots at Ourungabad ever heard of Grant's letter; next tell me

how you reconcile the fact of the ryots opposing the Police and threatening to drive the British out of India, with the assertion that they said it was by "Company ka hukum;" and then answer me whether you do not know as well as I can tell you, that the row at Ourungabad arose immediately, directly, and solely from a gross outrage committed upon the villagers by the planters' people.

*R. I. P.*—Well, I know the *Englishman* even did admit something about the row having arisen on account of oppression; but the ryots would not have dared to show fight if Government had not patted them on the back: and as to their opposing the Police, and saying it was by order of Government, why, these pig-headed brutes are inconsistent sometimes.

*C. C.*—So are other people.

*R. I. P.*—Well, we all know that the Government letter was published in a garbled form by the Magistrate of Baraset, and of course found its way to Moorshedabad.

*C. C.*—How was it published? When? and where?

*R. I. P.*—Oh! I do not know all these details; ask Forbes and Mackenzie; they say it was, and that's enough for me.

*C. C.*—But not for me.

*R. I. P.*—Well, extracts taken from the Government letter which were adverse to the planters were put by the Magistrate in a Circular, and sent to every thannah in Bengal. All the first part of the letter which was in the planters' favour was burked.

*C. C.*—Are you sure of this? I do not understand how a Magistrate could send a Circular to other districts; and have you moreover seen the letter? or how do you know that the portions omitted were in favour of the planters' case?

*R. I. P.*—I can't say for certain that the letter was circulated, and do not know what the omitted paragraphs of the letter contained ; but the daily papers say that they were in favour of the planters ; and the *Englishman* on Wednesday published a perwannah, issued to a thannah called Kalarooah, somewhere up in Rajshahye I fancy, alluding to this Circular from the Baraset Magistrate ; so it must be so. Besides, why should these paragraphs be omitted if they were not opposed to the Magistrate's views ? Of course they must have been wiggling him ; and he did not like the people to know this.

*C. C.*—I see you planters judge others by yourselves, but I should like to know more of this alleged circulation and garbling. What was the letter ? I see a letter from a Nuddea planter in Tuesday's *Englishman*, who says that the Nuddea ryots were all quiet until a letter was received by the Nuddea Commissioner, in connection with that abominable kidnapping case in which Mr. White is said to have been concerned. Now what I want to know is, how it happened that a letter connected with factories on the other side of Kishnaghur came to be sent to the Magistrate of Baraset, and what could he have to do with the matter ?

*R. I. P.*—I do not know ; there would certainly appear to be some slight confusion here. I believe that there were two letters, and the one alluded to by the Nuddea planter is not the one circulated by the Magistrate of Baraset.

*C. C.*—Well, the Nuddea planter ought to know best what it is that put his ryots up, if indeed anything did, but their own interests ; and therefore it is very clear that it was not in consequence of anything done by the Magistrate of Baraset that this assertion of independence on the part of the ryots has taken place.

*R. I. P.*—Well, it is all the same ; it is by some orders of Government ; never mind where or by whom they were issued.

*C. C.*—But it is necessary to proceed step by step. I want to find out the truth. What were the obnoxious orders in the Baraset case ?

*R. I. P.*—As far as I could understand from the papers put before us at our meeting, certain ryots petitioned before the Magistrate to protect them against a planter, who they alleged was about to sow their lands against their will with indigo. The Magistrate, instead of telling them, like any good fellow would have done, to go to h—l and sow indigo, told the Police, that if the lands were in the undisputed possession of these men, that they were to render them assistance in the event of the planter coming to sow their fields ~~forcibly~~ with any crop of his own. We would not stand this, and appealed to the Commissioner, and he cancelled the Magistrate's orders, and said that where the planter asserted that the ryots were under advances, he had a right to sow their land, and the Police were to be prohibited from aiding the ryots in the event of the planter sending to sow the lands through his servants. The Commissioner's orders were sent to the Police, and some correspondence appears to have taken place as to the correct view of the law on this subject, and the case went up to Government. The Lieutenant-Governor commented upon the case in the most inflammatory manner, and said the ryots had a right to sow what crop they liked on their own land, and that a mere *ex parte* allegation of an advance or contract did not give the planter any right to enter on the ryot's land; that a contract was a civil proceeding altogether, and that a Magistrate had nothing to do with an enquiry as to how far the alleged contract was *bona fide*, or how far it had been fulfilled or not by either party, and that the Civil Court was the only Court competent to entertain such questions, and that therefore the ryots were not to be ousted from their lands by the planters' servants on any such plea.

*C. C.*—There is nothing very new in that; that was the law of the land before the Lieutenant-Governor was born. Have you nothing worse than that to complain of? Why, your friend Halliday himself issued orders more unfavourable to the planters than that before he left; he actually went the length of saying that ryots were not to be compelled to enter into contracts against their will.

*R. I. P.*—Yes, but he did not *mean* it; he would have issued orders the very contrary, if he had only staid another month: he was forced by circumstances into the expression of an opinion of that sort.



C. C.—Well, I admit he had a playful way of always turning up on the winning side, and that he did gain a very precarious subsistence on a diet of his own words ; but you see he did *not* remain that extra month, and did *not* cancel his orders ; so is it not possible that after all the first blow came from your own idol ? But to return to the obnoxious letter—what became of it ?

R. I. P.—Why, as I said before, it was published by the Civilian Magistrate, who had a dislike to us.

C. C.—Dislike to you ! I see the *Englishman* says the same, but to which of you ? Do you know him ?

R. I. P.—No, I don't, but it is a general Civilian jealousy of us, not a personal dislike.

C. C.—Jealousy ! of what, pray ? What have you that Civilians have not ? According to your own accounts, you are the most miserable of beings. What do you mean that there is to be jealous of ?

R. I. P.—Don't cross-examine one so ; I am not in the witness-box. Well, to return to the letter : the Magistrate sent extracts of it to a Deputy Magistrate up in the other end of Bengal, Kalarooah.

C. C.—Indeed ! that was extraordinary certainly : let's have a look at the map ; why it is in Baraset. This Deputy must have been the Magistrate's own subordinate. Are you sure that the land which gave rise to the dispute was not in this Deputy's jurisdiction ?

R. I. P.—I am sure I do not know. What difference does it make ?

C. C.—Simply this, that if it is, the Magistrate would grossly have neglected his duty if he had not sent a copy of the orders in the case to him. You say that a copy of the Commissioner's orders in favour of the planters was sent, and you raise no objection to that because it was to the advantage of your class. What do you mean that the Magistrate

should have hidden the Government orders, or buried, or burnt them, and have allowed the Police to continue acting upon the order of the Commissioner? You surely don't think this would have been exactly fair to the ryots?

*R. I. P.*—Why not? You must not look at indigo cases as you do at other cases; recollect the good we do in clearing down jungle, building schools, hospitals, &c.

*C. C.*—Come, come, don't try that dodge with me. I am not a *Times* correspondent, and know as well as you do that a planter never cut down an acre of jungle in his life; and as to the hospitals and schools, eh! old fellow, don't provoke me into exposing such humbug. So it seems after all that this infamous circulation is confined to the letter having been sent by the Magistrate to one of his subordinates immediately connected with the case. However, one more question before we have done with the Magistrate. I see your respectable organ, the *Englishman*, says, that the ryots throughout Bengal have risen against the planters and against their own interests "*to please a young civilian who has a dislike against the planters.*" Now does it not speak volumes in favour of these "turbulent" men, that they should so good-naturedly sacrifice their interests to please a man whose name even they can never have heard of? Again, we have lately seen that there are other young civilians who have shown a very decided preference for the planters. How are these amiable cultivators to divide their allegiance in this case?

*R. I. P.*—Oh! don't go on harping on these things. The factories are being shut up, and we must say something. We can't spare time to reconcile all these details, that's Forbes' work.

*C. C.*—In fact, you admit the whole story to be trumped up, a mere bit of spite against an official who has been rash enough to ignore the right of the white man to trample on his black brother. Now for the Lieutenant-Governor. What is his crime? He says, you say, that the planters have no right forcibly to sow the lands of the Bengalee cultivator with a crop to which that cultivator objects. Do you mean to say he has?

*R. I. P.*—Why, of course he has ; what else do we spend such a lot of money in izharas, putnoes, talooks, &c., for, if it does not give us a right to make our tenants sow what we like ?

*C. C.*—If you choose to spend money under the impression that it gives you a right, it does not necessarily follow that you actually obtain that right. Let's have a look at the law. Well now, does it give you any right, even of the most remote description, to interfere with the cultivation of the ryots ? Is not their tenure more secure and definite even than your own ?

*R. I. P.*—Well, perhaps, abstractedly we have no right ; but Theobald preached the doctrine long since, that we should not look at the question abstractedly ; it is for the good of the country, of the ryots, and ourselves that we should exercise this interference.

*C. C.*—Granted that you benefit yourselves, but how do you benefit the country or the ryots ?

*R. I. P.*—Look at the capital we bring into the country and spend amongst the ryots.

*C. C.*—Look where ? I should like to see it : look at the capital you take out.

*R. I. P.*—Never mind where the money comes from. I know a factory where the expenditure last year was three lakhs of rupees. Do you mean to say that that did not benefit the ryots ?

*C. C.*—Perhaps if they had it all it might do them some good, yet not so much as the free use of their own land would do ; but you know as well as I do, that not above Rupees 40,000 of that sum found its way into the hands of the actual cultivators. Managers with their twelve or fourteen horses, their shikar parties, open house, assistants innumerable, assistants' horses still more innumerable, saddlery, boats, houses, &c. their factory servants, Court expenses (of course not bribery or perjury), affrays, swindling—come,—admit, very little of it goes to the ryots.

*R. I. P.*—Well, perhaps, not so much as ought to go there, but it is the system.

*C. C.*—Exactly ; more's the pity, and hence the present row, which is attributable solely and wholly to your system, and not inflammatory Lieut.-Governors or firebrand Magistrates. Now I hold in my hand a careful calculation of the actual produce of 2 beegahs of land in the same village ; one sown with indigo gives a crop of 15 bundles, equal in value to Rs. 3 ; and this you will admit was a very good crop. The cost of cultivating that beegah and incidental expenses connected therewith, seed, stamp paper, ameen's and khalassee's dustooree, ploughing, weeding, and rent, was Rs. 6: the ryot therefore lost three rupees on the crop. The other beegah was sown with oujdhan first and then with peas ; the crops gave 11-8, the expense of cultivation and rent came to 3-4 : so you see that the ryot lost 3 rupees out of hand for his indigo, and 8-4, which he would have got if he had been allowed to sow it with what he liked—total loss by indigo, 11-4. Does it not strike you that this has more to do with the present position of the ryots toward the planters than any letters, affection for young Civilians, or anything else ? You see that where there is a cultivation of 30,000 beegahs in one estate, and a loss of 11 rupees 4 annas on each beegah, it can hardly be said that you do much to benefit the country.

*R. I. P.*—Well, perhaps, it is not altogether profitable, but England must have indigo, and we cannot afford to pay higher : after all we only do precisely what Government does with the opium, and Government takes especial care to protect itself by summary laws from defaulting cultivators.

*C. C.*—I beg your pardon. The cultivators are in no way similar ; opium is an article of excise, and its cultivation must be guarded by special laws : it is, however, altogether a ready-money transaction. Government has no outstanding balances of 20 years old to hold *in terrorem* over the head of a ryot who won't sow.

*R. I. P.*—No, because they recover all the balances by a summary process.

*C. C.*—Mistaken as usual. The summary law no longer exists, and has never once been put in force against a single cultivator since its first enactment. It was virtually made of no effect by Act X. of 1859. Government makes it for the interest of the cultivator to fulfil his engagements, and, consequently, no summary process is required, and balances are never outstanding.

*R. I. P.*—How does Government excite the interest of this most apathetic, lazy, good-for-nothing, dishonest, hooka-smoking animal to that extent? Why, the ryots of the most popular planters do not sow willingly.

*C. C.*—By offering them a price for their crop, which will give them two or three rupees more than the most profitable ordinary crop that they could grow would give. Government found that during the last two years, on account of the increased value of other crops, the cultivators would not sow poppy. What was done? The agents did not sit down and tear their hair, abuse the law which prevented their taking the lands of the cultivators by force, but they represented to Government that the price of all other commodities having risen, the only way of keeping up the opium provision was by increasing the price paid to the cultivators. The necessity for doing this was so evident, that the price was at once increased from Rs. 3-4 to 3-8 per seer, and either has been or will be increased to Rs. 3-12 or 4. Now this advance of eight annas per seer is equal to Rs. 3 per beegah; and if you planters, instead of attributing the unwillingness of the ryots to sow to causes which cannot but render you ridiculous in the eyes of the thinking public, will advance your price to such an extent as will give the ryot a profit of at least Rs. 6 per beegah, instead of a loss of Rs. 3, you will find that your difficulties are at an end; the Lieutenant-Governor and all his Magistrates may write, say, or do what they like, and they will not decrease your cultivation by a single bundle. Before you compare indigo to opium, you must recollect that the opium ryot clears Rs. 22-8 annas per beegah by his crop; the indigo ryot loses Rs. 3. The opium ryot has his account closed within a week of the delivery of his crop, and the money is paid directly to him by an European gentleman; the

indigo ryot never gets paid at all, but has his accounts adjusted by a corrupt dewan or mohurrir six months after he has given in his produce, and care is always taken to bring him out in debt to the factory.

*R. I. P.*—This is all very well, but we cannot afford to pay more. England must have indigo ; the Queen's speech distinctly alludes to it ; and Wilson says it must be encouraged. There is no help for it, the ryots must be made to sow at our price.

*C. C.*—Did Wilson really say that ?

*R. I. P.*—Not exactly, but he said that he would not put any extra Export Duty on indigo, and even felt inclined to take off the Duty that was now on it.

*C. C.*—But surely there is some difference between legitimately encouraging a great staple like indigo by taking off an Export Duty, and illegitimately forcing it by allowing the traders therein to trespass on the rights of others. Did Wilson really say that he was an advocate for this latter process ?

*R. I. P.*—Why, some of our fellows went to him, and left him with the idea that he entirely coincided in their views.

*C. C.*—Oh ! is that all ? It is an extraordinary fact that fifty men of fifty different parties, advocating fifty measures all diametrically opposite, have had interviews with that gentleman, and have all come away with a most decided impression that they had convinced him fully of the justness of their own views. I will tell you some anecdotes on this subject another time. It seems to be a peculiarity of the great Financier to let his visitors go away with this impression, and leave them to find out their mistake at leisure.

*R. I. P.*—As I said before, England must have indigo, and can't afford to pay more for it. No change is possible.

C. C.—I am afraid that England must either pay for indigo or go without. If she really wants it, and can't get it elsewhere, she can afford to pay for it, and must pay for it at the market price. If she will not do this, we may very safely infer that she can either do without it, or get it elsewhere where it can be produced cheaper. It is no fault of the Lieutenant-Governor that the system has abruptly come to an end, but it is a disgrace to Government that it was ever allowed to exist at all. We must knock this system on the head, give you a Black Act, and then you will learn to live peaceably and honestly, and, what is more, let others do the same. In the meantime you had better go and destroy your absurd petition, and learn in future to stick to facts. You may as well eat Mr. Forbes' Draft, as otherwise you will have to eat your own words as sure as you stand there. Now as you look shut up, we will adjourn for the present.

*Erit Cool Civilian, Hot Planter calls for a peg, and feels as small as his physique will permit.—Indian Field, March 10, 1860.*

## NUDDEA PLANTERS.

*To the Editor of "The Indian Field."*

DEAR SIR,—Some hundred villagers have complained to Magistrates and Deputy Magistrates of the outrages committed on them by the planters, and have implored for protection; but all have been sent away, their complaints have been disregarded as not worth while listening to. One of my informants told me, that Mr. Sibbald, of Nondonpore, comforted his downcast brothers, saying they did not know how to subdue these Bengalees, and that he would show them how to do it. Accordingly, he and another planter set out (at the beginning of January of this year) with a multitude of lattials and spearsmen, drummers (I forbear giving numbers, as I cannot persuade myself to believe in them, for it borders almost on fabulousness), and came to the village of Balioora. After a short display there, and after throwing down a number of Rupees to the lattials and drummers, the procession went through the neighbouring villages of Bhiterparah and Toronipoor, and thence to

the neighbouring village of Meliapoota, the inhabitants of which have, to a great degree, gone along with the people of Pathorghata and Gobindopore. An extraordinary display, therefore, was necessary here. Under the great tree, before the village, the company halted, and had dancing and drumming for about two hours. The display was a great one, for the number of lattials and other adherents of the planters had in the mean time greatly increased. And, besides the two Sahibs on horseback, there were other horsemen (Dewans and Naibs of several factories had joined the company). Hence they proceeded to Phoolparee, an out-factory of Harra. Here the select ones of the company got a splendid dinner (country grog even was provided), and the rest of them got a tiffin (phalar). The same night, or the next morning before day-break, the lattials had to attack the adjoined stubborn villages of Pathorghata and Gobindopore. When the people of these two villages heard of it, one amongst them went on horseback to Shutti, close to Phoolparee, in order to ascertain how many lattials were there collected ; and after he had learnt that 5,000 (say one 1,000, or cut even one cipher) lattials were ready to attack their village, he rode back to Pathorghata, and advised the people to flee with their wives and children. But the men of the village insisted on remaining and offering the fiercest resistance, saying they were determined to kill at least half of them in the streets of their village. The lattials, hearing of their determination, refused to make an attack. The darogah also (who first wanted to flee, but the people prevented his doing so), I was told, wrote or sent a message to the planters, saying, if they wished to stick up a bamboo, some five or six men should come over for the purpose, but a host of lattials was not necessary. If a fight were to take place, he would be in a very awkward position. Thus the original plan was abandoned, and the following morning the procession went on to Karipara, where nothing happened (except that a bamboo was stuck up and a demonstration of power made by the drummers, &c.), for many of the people had fled away. But on their way back to Birpore, a stand-up fight took place between the villagers and the lattials in the presence of the Sahib or Sahebs. The lattials, however, had to flee in all directions, as the hard bale-fruit and the hard clots reached farther than the spears. They were as numerous as the leaves of Vallombrosa. Nevertheless, the



expedition was to many villages a powerful demonstration that the planters are the supreme and irresponsible governors of the country ; the people were cowed thereby into subjection.

Still, as mentioned above, many new villages continue to complain, but are not listened to by the Magistrate, *but required to bring witnesses of the truth of their complaint. Fancy hundreds of villages, and thousands and thousands of people, not knowing each other, and still complaining of one and the same thing, and considering that each village can only complain and witness their own sufferings, i. e. the people are sufferers, plaintiffs, and witnesses in one, and have got no other out-of-door witness except their oppressors, the planters and the missionaries, who are too malicious to be heard ! Fancy all these people are sent home, back into their oppressors' hands, on the plea of having got no witness !!! Has ever any nation on earth been plagued with these people ?*

The most unfortunate of the villages are Pathorghata and Gobindopore. It is now nearly half a year since they are running about seeking for protection. Hundreds of lattials are in constant readiness to attack their villages. Outrages are also committed, cows taken away, &c. Some five or six of the people have been kidnapped months ago, and can on no account be recovered ; nor are we sure whether they are alive at all. The people of the villages are never for one moment sure of their lives and property.

The Magistrate ever turned a deaf ear unto them, until at last the planters caught the people in a trap, and gave the Magistrate a plea to sentence the first people of the villages to imprisonment, or a heavy fine (the particulars I will give another time, for, malicious as I am, I know them exactly from disinterested parties). Now the planters have got a fresh handle. They have convinced the Magistrate that they are a dreadful set of blood-thirsty savages. Now false complaints are instituted against them, as if they were about to loot the villages of Howlia and Natna for having given in to the planters ; and soon you will hear that they will complain of them of having actually looted it,

while on the self-same day the planters' lattials will loot Pathorghata and Gobindopore, and when the people complain to the Magistrate, their complaint will appear a false counter-complaint against the planter, and the wise Magistrate will tell them, "Ah ! you won't catch me !" and afresh sentence them to imprisonment or heavy fine, for these are the planters' ways.

*And Magistrates know it as well as I do ; and still they allow planters to deceive them again. I at least hope with the good "Saxon," it is want of capacity and not of justice. When, some months ago, I admonished a planter, before a European Government officer, and related some instances of oppression and intrigue practised by the planters, within my own personal knowledge, "Oh ! that's nothing at all," he said ; "I will tell you an instance where the Magistrate was bought out and out." He said there was a planter who wanted to loot a certain village, because the people would not enter into a contract with him ; he therefore had his own house looted by his own people, and some of his own people slightly speared by his own people, and sent in all haste for the Magistrate to witness himself what the savages of the village had done. In no time the Magistrate was present, condoling with his friend's great misfortune, and a complaint in writing was sent to the Magistrate. No sooner had the Magistrate gone again, than the planters' lattials, all in readiness, went and looted the refractory village out and out. The poor people, who did not know what had happened at the factory, and that the Magistrate had been there, the following day lodged a complaint before the Magistrate against the planter for looting their village, and the Magistrate told them, "Ah ! you won't catch me !" He was quite sure their complaint was a false cross-action. So it has happened to the Pathorghata and Gobindopore people, and shortly will happen again. I also hear that the planters have even succeeded in frightening into subjection the people of Howlia, on whose account I had gone to the Commissioner, that they are now prepared to proceed into the station to lay a complaint before the Magistrate, drawn up by the planters, against me. But if they will play such a dirty trick to me, I will make them go through evidence. First they tried to frighten me by public abuse, and then by complaining to my Society and the bishop ;*

little knowing what a "crazed enthusiast" like myself can do! both without a society and a surplice, but not without mercy and judgment. And now intrigues are tried, as if that were sufficient to frighten or dishearten me! O no! Mr. Furlong must know *I am far more than a mere "enthusiast."* I am ready to go to prison, for such a good cause like this, as history shows, has never been accomplished, except it was stained by the blood of God's servants. The slaves of the West Indies have not been emancipated, until not only one but several missionaries had been maltreated and imprisoned. Who, acquainted with that affair, does not remember the history of Mr. Burchell? While writing this I receive two letters from the interior, saying that the district about Pathorghata, Gobindopore, Solo, and Pootimaree are in a state of perfect anarchy, but I have already been too long and my time is up, so no more for this time. Once more I beg you will kindly insert my letter in your next issue.

Yours faithfully,  
C. BOMWETSCH.

*Runaghat, in Camp, 15th February, 1860.*

"THE MUTINY" AT OURUNGABAD.—When the planters found that the ryots of Bengal were determined not to take advances or enter into contracts for the cultivation of Indigo until a remunerative price was offered, the policy which they marked out for themselves was, by means of mendacious assertions and false rumours of disturbances, to frighten the Government into giving some order which they could garble into an expression of the desire of Government, that the old short-sighted policy of sacrificing justice to expediency should continue. One of the first falsehoods which their organ published was, that, in consequence of an order given to his Police by a Deputy Magistrate living at a distance of 200 miles from the scene of the alleged occurrence, the ryots of Ourungabad had risen *en masse*, and driven the planters out of the country, calling out that they were, in accordance with the orders of Government, about to drive the English out of India. The malicious falseness of the statement was self-evident, and we at once contradicted it, assuring our

readers that whatever had happened had been the immediate and direct consequence of gross oppression, and nothing else. We are now, through the kindness of a friend, in the correctness of whose statement we can fully rely, in a position to give our readers a full and true account of what actually happened, from which it will be seen that the orders of Government had nothing whatever to do with the matter. We are further assured by a gentleman residing within a few miles of the scene of this disturbance, that no orders of Government have ever been heard of in that neighbourhood.

It would appear that for a long time past the ryots on the Estate of Mr. David Andrews, a non-resident owner of Indigo Factories, had been most grievously oppressed by a Mahomedan Gomashta, named Meer Tuffuzzul Hossein of Shabghatty; they have been compelled to sow Indigo on fictitious advances; they did not make any resistance to that, believing it to be their lot in common with all their other brother ryots of Bengal: next, the lands which they had sown with other crops were ploughed up and sown with Indigo; then the very paths to their houses and their gardens were ploughed up with Indigo: even this they bore. Taking courage at their patience, their oppressors proceeded to levy a tax on their bullocks, ploughs, and carts; and on every ceremony performed in their houses, if a sufficient wedding-fee was not forthcoming, the newly-married brides were forced out on to the plain and made to weed the Indigo fields. At last the proverbial patience of the Bengal ryots would stand it no longer; they went and complained to Mr. Rice, the Manager at Kalapanee Factory. He replied that he highly commended the proceedings of his gomashta. They next appealed to Mr. Macleod, the Head Mofussil Manager of the Concern, and a gentleman generally known to be as kind and considerate as the occupation of Indigo planting will permit. He, instead of calling in the Police to inquire into these charges proceeded himself to hold an inquiry, took the deposition of the complainants, and suspended the gomashta. Before, however, finishing his inquiries, he had to come down to Calcutta, and before going re-instated the Meer Sahib, the ruffianly gomashta being left with no one to check him, but Mr. Rice, who had before told the ryots that he approved of the manner in which they were oppressed, at once

commenced his tyranny and extortion with re-doubled vigour, determined to retaliate upon the unfortunate ryots for his late suspension. The ryots despairing of obtaining justice, rose as a body, and determined to rid themselves of their tyrant or die in the attempt. They collected to the number of 5,000, proceeded to the factory of Ankorreah, and gave the gomashtha, Tuffuzzul Hossein, a most severe and exceedingly well-deserved thrashing. They proceeded to beat slightly some of the other factory servants, and then left without touching a single article belonging to the planter. They never cried "out with the English," and made no allusion even to orders of Government: their only cry was "out with the Indigo planter and Indigo leaf." The inquiry, which was immediately instituted, showed so clearly that the proceedings of the ryots were entirely the result of provocation, that the owner of the factories has at once compromised the case, not having a leg to stand on. Mr. Rice and Meer Tuffuzzul Hossein have been discharged from his employ; all the servants are to be replaced by a new set of men; the lands which they had sown with their own crops, and which were afterwards re-sown with Indigo, have been returned to the ryots for their own use; all money proved to be extorted is now being returned, and Mr. D. Andrews has instituted further and private inquiries as to the oppression which has goaded his ryots into active opposition. If these factories had belonged to the Bengal Indigo Company, the ryots would have been thrown into jail, the Manager would have had his salary increased, and the Commissioner and Magistrate would have gone to dine with the Manager, and have consoled him over the conduct of these "turbulent ruffians"; but fortunately for these men, the factories belonged to Mr. D. Andrews, and Mr. Macleod was his Manager, and hence in spite of all the attempts of the Indigo Planters' Association to endeavour to induce them to make a case of it, the ryots have received justice, and the fault of the factory servants has been admitted by a compromise.

We have received information of a further outrage not 20 miles from Ourungabad, but not in connection with the Ourungabad Concern. Our information is received from a trustworthy source, but as the case is still *sub judice*, we do not at present give names. A man of the name of Juggobundoo Dutt, of the village of A., held his village in Dhur Putnee,

and as Dhur Putneedar granted an izara or farm of the village to a neighbouring planter, the planter had no sooner got the farm, than, after the usual custom of his race, he proceeded to commit every kind of oppression, and ultimately refused to pay any of the rent of his farm, &c. Juggobundoo, being unable to cope with the planter, granted a Se Putnee of the village to a neighbouring rajah, and got him to send him some men to protect him. Upon this the "developer of the material resources of the country" proceeded to fulfil his mission by sending 400 armed men to the village of A., who attacked Juggobundoo's house, ill-treated his female relatives, tearing their jewels and ornaments from their persons, dug up the floors and walls of the house, and carried off an enormous sum of money; and the unhappy Juggobundoo himself and some other men took them to the factory, and made his mehter offer them the grossest and most revolting insult which it is possible to imagine, and which we will not shock and disgust our readers with mentioning in detail. Juggobundoo was kept confined for some days, and then released on the sole condition that he would not prosecute. The case is, however, under enquiry, but the shame of Juggobundoo and the money of his adversary will, perhaps, save Mr. — from the imprisonment which he deserves. The enquiry has been grievously misconducted in its preliminary stage, and the culprit may escape; but the sensation which it has caused throughout the district will not subside for many a long day. Yet with outrages such as these constantly occurring, people are found to express astonishment at the hatred of the people to the planters as a body, and at the fear and dread which seize the planters on the slightest symptom of independence amongst their ryots.

If the Ourungabad disturbance was exaggerated, what shall we say of the Kishnaghur, Jessore, and Baraset "rapine, murder, plunder, and arson?" All the "burnt-down factories" resolve themselves into the partial burning of a small shed near the Khajorreah Factory. This burning down of out-houses by the planter to get up a case against his ryots is such a terribly stale dodge, that we are surprised at a planter in these days of refined fraud and perjury having recourse to such an exceedingly coarse and clumsy expedient. The thing was so transparent, that we before stated our belief that the planters' own people would prove

to be the incendiaries, and we now have it reported officially, not by a prejudiced Magistrate, but by the official whom least of all the Nuddea planters could charge with prejudice against them—we mean the Commissioner of Nuddea. The bands of lattials roaming through the country, of whom even the *Friend* of Serampore is in a fright, are equally mythical. The ryots won't take advances, hence they are "mutinous." In Kishnaghur the ryots beat drums, and caused the hearts of their oppressors to palpitate. In Jessore they laughed at the naibs and chaffed the amcens. In Baraset they moved neither hand nor foot, but simply withdrew their ambassadors from the planters' Court,—*hinc illæ lachrymæ*. If the ryots *did* gather together, it was for self-defence from the attacks of the planters, an apprehension which Mr. Grote believes to be groundless, but of which we are not so sure, judging from the course which the *Hurkaru* reminds his friends to pursue.

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The beating of the "respectable young men" in the employ of the respectable Bengal Indigo Company was a fact, and Mr. Grote says it was "unwarrantable and bold." Bold it was doubtless, as the ryots must have known that, whether they were acting purely in self-defence or not, they were, in virtue of their position as residents of the Nuddea district, certain of six months' imprisonment according to the bye-laws of the zillah: whether it was unwarrantable in the ryots to prevent a stranger accompanied by 25 hired ruffians from entering upon their fields, to take possession thereof is another matter, about which there appear to be two very different opinions. However, the planters have gained two important concessions,—they have got the Commissioner to lend them police peons to help to sow the Indigo, and they have got Government to issue an order—which is vague enough—to afford the planters an opening for converting it into an order to the ryots to sow under penalty of imprisonment. If the ryots follow our advice, they will be magnanimous and sow this year; next year their course is clear, not to go near the factories until they are offered the price they demand. They have got the Government order, "THAT IT IS OPTIONAL WITH RYOTS TO TAKE ADVANCES, AND TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS FOR INDIGO, OR NOT TO DO SO, AS THEY MAY THINK BEST FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS."

They have now their Magna Charter as well as the planters ; they can afford this year to be generous, and to return good for evil to the wretched cowards who tremble at the sound of a tom-tom in the hands of those ryots to whom they have so long, according to their own account, stood *in loco parentis*.—*Indian Field*, March 17, 1860.

THE INDIGO AFFAIR.—It appears that a great deal more noise has been made and alarm excited by the first reports of the Kishnaghur riots, than facts now elicited would justify. Beyond a few bruises on the persons of a couple of Indigo assistants, who were personally engaged in an affray, no serious accidents have taken place to warrant the language of a contemporary a few days ago. It has, moreover, been suggested, if not broadly asserted, that these gentlemen got so roughly used in the execution of an unlawful purpose, and should be thankful for coming in for nothing worse. Whatever the particulars of the affair—of which we hope shortly to be better informed through the efforts of the parties principally concerned—we have to congratulate them on the prompt attention which their representations have received from the authorities, and the equally prompt manner in which they have been acted. To Mr. Herschel is due the credit of having visited the leading rioters with decisive punishment, and of having dealt effectually with a movement which, although of no serious aspect at first, might, if not checked by summary measures at the very outset, have disorganized the whole country. In the interests of order so seriously threatened, no application of force could be too early; and however we might have felt on the score of humanity on the exercise of severities among a population ordinarily so well disposed, it would have been our duty to uphold the measures of Government for the restoration of tranquillity. It is, accordingly, a relief to our minds, that Mr. Herschel was not put to the necessity of calling out the Military Police, as he threatened the villagers in one of his proclamations.

We would take the opportunity of urging that it is as well to accept these risings as signs of the times. It is not usual for a population anywhere to assume a hostile attitude towards those regarding whom their



feelings of respect and submission are habitual and traditionary, unless they are under strong and long continued inducements to the contrary; and the thing is almost impossible in the Bengal ryot, so born as he seems to slavery and its heritages. Those to whom the charge is given might now seriously think of measures to improve his condition, his material prosperity, as the means of ameliorating his social position. Notwithstanding all that has been asserted of his sloth, his dishonesty, and general bad character, we can conceive him more easily led to his interests by practical efforts to do him good, to render him happy and contented with his lot, (not a very enviable one among other peasantries in the world,) than the invariable resort to the *punchum-huftum*. We have, therefore, noticed with pleasure, that at a meeting of some of the leading planters in the Nuddea district, held the other day at Shikarpore, the subject of re-considering the rates of advances for the cultivation of Indigo, with reference to the high prices of food and wages of labour, was mooted. Some such concessions will be extremely popular at the present moment, with the advantage of being highly politic.—*Phoenix*.

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## THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

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INDIGO COMMISSION.—We give a prominent insertion to the following Petition of the British Indian Association, as it breathes a very proper tone, and is pervaded by an earnest desire to see justice done to all parties :—

TO THE HONOURABLE J. P. GRANT,

*Lieut.-Governor of Bengal.*

*The Humble Petition of the  
British Indian Association*

SHOWETH,—That your Petitioners have viewed with much concern the contest which has sprung up within the last few months between the ryots and planters engaged in the cultivation and manufacture of Indigo in Kishnaghur and other districts in Lower Bengal.

The contest has, within the last few weeks, assumed a serious aspect, and things have approached to a crisis ; which is much to be lamented, though your Petitioners have good reasons to believe that the accounts published in the newspapers are greatly exaggerated, and they have not been surprised to perceive such to be the case from the report of the Commissioner of the Nuddea Division.

Your Petitioners cannot view the contest in any other light than as a natural struggle between Labour and Capital, and as such, its settlement ought, they are of opinion, to be left to the operation of economical laws, uninterfered with by the Government or Legislature on any side.

But circumstances have arisen, your Petitioners regret to state, which call for the interference of the authorities. Both parties have appealed to the Government for intercession and aid, and both are loud in declaring the truth and justice to be on their side. Further, it has been declared on behalf of Indigo planters, that inaction on the part of Government may lead them " to take the law into their own hands," and it has ever been circumstantially stated that " planters (at Kishnaghur) are engaging sailors in Calcutta " as a preliminary measure against such a contingency. As a confirmation to the above, your Petitioners observe certain Indigo planters of Kishnaghur stating in an official letter of theirs to the Secretary to their Association at Calcutta, that, failing attention from Government, " we must endeavour to do what is best for ourselves." This, if true, indicates a state of things fraught with danger to the peace of the district, and requires, in the judgment of your Petitioners, the prompt attention of Government.

Your Petitioners do not pretend to judge between the two contending parties, and emphatically disavow hostility to either. They, however, feel persuaded, that the question is surrounded by such difficulties by reason of the strong personal interests involved in it of both the parties, that without a public and efficient enquiry, it will be hopeless, your Petitioners believe, for Government as well as the public at large to arrive at a correct and impartial solution in regard to it.

There are two subjects connected with the cultivation of Indigo, which, your Petitioners think, above all others particularly call for this enquiry. Your Honour is aware that among other things the loudest complaints have been made by the ryots—whether with justice or not your Petitioners do not feel competent to decide—against the low rates of remuneration, compared to other articles of cultivation, especially of rice, given for the cultivation of Indigo plant, and the system of advances in vogue in the Indigo factories of lower Bengal.

In 1856 your Petitioners, in common with the estimable and philanthropic body of Protestant Missionaries of Bengal, prayed of the Government for a Commission of Enquiry of the kind referred to above. In the present prayer, however, they feel it a particular pleasure to be able to state that they have the concurrence of the European Planters immediately interested in the cultivation of Indigo, who, in their recent Petition to your Honour, have openly “courted the fullest enquiries.”

A Commission of Enquiry of the kind prayed for has long been desiderated. Whether as regards the interests of the planters or those of the ryots, a searching, patient, and unbiassed enquiry has been held to be the only means by which a true solution of this intricate and important question can be discovered, and the real character of the facts so vehemently disputed on both sides established. It is believed to be the sole means which will above all settle the position of the ryot, who has been unceasing in his complaints, and clear up the future of British enterprise in the interior, the fusion of which with Native capital and industry is justly considered to be the main security for the progress of the country in material prosperity.

Your Petitioners have observed with regret, that it has been recommended to your Honour to bring “special legislation” to bear upon British enterprise in the Mofussil by way of encouragement. Much as your Petitioners value British enterprise in India—much as they hope for the introduction of British capital, energy, and skill into this land as the pioneer of progress—much as they look to European science and its application for the development of the inexhaustible resources of this

country—they would yet reckon it as humiliating as discreditable to British Settlers, and unfortunate for the people, if those excellent advantages, which cannot be undervalued without gross positive injustice, could not be obtained without the aid of “special legislation.”

Your Petitioners would, therefore, pray that your Honour may be pleased to consider the propriety of issuing a Commission of Enquiry, consisting of such a number of persons as your Honour may deem fit, into the cultivation of Indigo in lower Bengal, with special reference to the rates of remuneration and the system of advances connected therewith.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

(Signed) ISSURCHUNDER SING,  
*British Indian Association Rooms ; )      Honorary Secretary.*  
*No. 3, Cossitollah,*  
*The 22nd March, 1860.*

We accord our hearty support to the prayer for a Commission of Enquiry into the working of the Indigo system. It is most reasonable, and we trust it may be complied with.

A Commission of Enquiry appears in our judgment to be the most judicious way of settling this vexed question. Though our sympathies are always with the oppressed, and not with the oppressors, yet we should be grieved to see the ryots driven by desperation and “sheer zooloom” (as the *Hurkaru* is obliged to admit in case of the Ourungabad population) to commit agrarian outrages. No special law can permit masters to enforce contracts which are binding only on one party ; still less does it permit them to force their advances on ryots. The cause of the quarrel is, that the ryots *refused to take advances*, and not that they fail to fulfil their contracts. The planters demand laws which will enable them to recover these forced advances summarily, and which will make it a penal offence for a black man to be indebted to a white man.

It is incumbent on the Government not only to prevent breaches of the peace, but to sift the whole iniquitous system of "developing the resources in the Mofussil."

It will not be sufficient to employ European troops and double the force of jemadars, burkundazes, and chowkeedars in Kishnaghur and Jessore. If the manufacture of Indigo be, as the Lieutenant-Governor's letter, published elsewhere, conclusively shows, a forced trade, no police or legislation in the world will prevent its decline. That letter is an authoritative confirmation of all that has been said against the Indigo system.

The Indigo problem demands a speedy solution. An impartial Commission appears to be the best, if not only, means of solving it. Its enquiry should embrace the operation of the whole system—its connection with the Zemindary system and tenures of land—relation of labour with capital—the connection of Indigo with other crops—the mode of giving advances and working them out—and lastly, the necessity or otherwise of enacting a special law for the special protection of the "unprotected" planter.

Since the above was in type, we have learnt that the Indigo Bill, brought in by Mr. Sconce at the Legislative Council this morning, provides for the appointment of a Commission such as we have long advocated, and the British Indian Association have prayed for. We understand it is to be of a mixed character, consisting of a Civilian, a Native gentleman, and a Merchant, or a Lawyer. If the Commission goes to work in a proper way, it is sure to attain the objects of its appointment.—*Indian Field*, March 24, 1860.

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## THE INDIGO BILL.

"*Belvidere*," 23rd March, 1860.

"MY DEAR SCONCE,—I send you a fair copy of the Bill, which I think will do for a first and second reading, pretty well as it is. I have tried to introduce the alterations determined on this evening.

"My reasons for recommending the Bill are, in short, these :—

"That there is ground for believing that a great commercial calamity is threatened, by the feeling which has suddenly manifested itself amongst Indigo Ryots to repudiate their agreements to cultivate, Indigo, although advances have been made to and accepted by them only a short time ago, in the usual manner, and upon the usual understanding, namely, that they should cultivate Indigo for the planters at the usual rates. I am myself of the opinion that the Indigo cultivators have, and long have had, great and increasing ground of just complaint against the whole system of Indigo cultivation. But if they desired to break off their connection with that system they should have done so before receiving the season's advances. After working off existing engagements for which they have received the usual advance, they will have it in their power honestly to refuse to grow another plant of Indigo, unless it is made for their own interest to do so. It will be monstrous if they are not allowed, not merely by the theory of the law, but in effect, to exercise their legal and moral right in this matter. But they have, in my opinion, no moral right, and certainly they have no legal right, to turn suddenly round upon the planters, and with nothing to complain of now more than they had before, to refuse to do what, up to this moment, they have led the planters to expect that they would do according to custom and agreement. I conceive that, whether the custom is good or bad, and whether the agreement on the ryot's part be provident or improvident, and whether the general position of the ryot who grows Indigo be or be not, for the time being, one of great hardship, no individual ryot has a moral right to break his agreement. And still less can I think that a mass of ryots who have agreed and accepted advances in the usual manner, have any moral right to combine for the purpose of simultaneously breaking their agreements in order to ruin the other party. Against such a combination, and for the purpose of saving from ruin, if possible, a great commercial interest, which, however false its position may long have been, has certainly done nothing to the injury of the ryot since the last advances were made and accepted in usual course a few weeks ago ; it appears to me that a law giving a

very summary, but still a fair trial, and inflicting penal damages on the party, who after a fair trial is found to be determined wilfully to break his engagement,—is both justifiable and proper. The draft of a law which I enclose does no more than this. But I am of opinion that no law that could be framed regarding Indigo-planting at the present moment should be more than temporary. Especially, I think, that no law in the interest of the planter could, at the present moment, be honestly proposed, which should have any effect beyond the season now running on. We all of us know that the system is full of abuses. If we had never heard a word about Indigo-planting since we arrived in India; if there was not upon record a single case of abuse on the part of an Indigo planter or a zeminder (and in this respect I desire to draw no invidious distinction between one class and another), the mere fact of the existence of the present difficulty would in itself prove that the system is rotten, and that the rottenness consists in this, that in practice the ryot is made to act like a slave, not like a free man. Under a wholesome and fair system of trade, there must be in all dealing between two parties mutual gain, or at least the hope of mutual gain, and both parties to every dealing must be free agents. If, therefore, the Indigo-planting trade were in a wholesome and fair state, and an equal law were practically applicable to the rich and to the poor in dealings between planter and ryots, it is certain that the ryot would be as much afraid of the manufacturer not buying his plant, as clamorous for a special law on his side, as the manufacturer is afraid that the ryot will not cultivate and supply him with enough of the plant, and clamorous for special law on his side. We see that the present struggle on the part of the ryots is to avoid the cultivation of Indigo. From this it is certain that ryots who cultivate Indigo are forced to do so by illegitimate coercion. The same men who fight for the privilege of cultivating a field with rice for sale in the open market, are now almost in rebellion, in order to escape the calamity of cultivating a field with Indigo for sale (if sale it can be called) to the planter.

There must be a thorough inquiry into the whole system. There would have been such an inquiry long ago, I believe, if people had not been afeard of bringing on such a crisis as has now occurred. The sys-

tem was such, that sooner or latter a crisis was certain : it has now come in the natural course of things, and there is no longer an excuse for shirking the disclosure of the disease and the application of the remedy. For these reasons I could recommend no law other than a temporary law, and no law of any sort unless its promulgation to the ryots may be accompanied with a promise of full and thorough inquiry into past practice, and thereafter of a well-considered law, which shall afford, practically, equal and complete protection to the ryot as well as to the planter.

Yours sincerely,

J. P. GRANT.

[The result of the above letter has been the Act XI. of 1860, entitled "*An Act to enforce the fulfilment of Indigo Contracts and to provide for the Commission of Enquiry.*" The only redeeming feature of this law is the provision for a Commission of Enquiry, and it is to be hoped this Enquiry will compensate for the injustice and hardship which its arbitrary provisions are in the highest degree calculated to inflict on the people. But if temporary present sufferings will set the ryots free from the same for all future time under the British rule, they will, the writer can state from his personal knowledge of their feeling, gladly undergo the incarceration and losses for double the period of that to which this Special Law has doomed them.—*Compiler.*]



[*Since the above was in type, the following appeared in "the Indian Field," illustrative of the nature of the contracts subsisting between Indigo Planters and Ryots.*]

*To the Editor of "the Indian Field."*

DEAR SIR,—Eight years ago, when I still lived at Solo, my old mission-station, and when Mr. Hills,—whose Concern Mr. Forlong now manages—was about to secure to himself the neighbouring talooks, the munduls of these villages came to me in bodies of ten, twenty, and even upwards to fifty men in a body, begging very hard of me to take these few talooks around me, in order to save them from indigo oppression. They were, in case I would do so, ready to raise half the amount of the sum wanted for the purchase of the talooks amongst themselves, and make it over to me as pure present, which, indeed, they would have done, simply to escape indigo oppression. Some of the talookdars themselves too sent word to me, saying I should take their talooks. At last all the talooks (under what circumstances I cannot mention in a letter) were secured by the Nischindipore Concern. The ryots were awe-struck.

Those who until then had never sown indigo, or very little, (the people of Meliaputta, Pathorghata, and Gobindopore,) again came to beg me to protect them from the oppression that was to come upon them, and which I at the time did not understand as I do now. When the planters heard that the munduls had been with me, he, as their new rajah (king) fined, *i. e.*, took by force from every one of them, as a punishment for having gone to the padree, a sum of money of upwards of twenty-five rupees!! This, of course, put a stop to their coming to me any longer, and they were obliged to take advances for the first time and for the last, (for since that time they, with perhaps some exceptions, never got any,) and were doomed to sow indigo for ever, and that at their own enormous expense, and to their own loss and ruin. The Christians, however, (of the Meliaputta village) would not yield so easily, as they thought it my duty to protect them against oppression. Not aware at the time of the awful sort of oppression, I advised them to sow a little indigo,

telling them to consider that the planter had taken the talook merely for the indigo's sake. But they, knowing better than myself, would not on any account consent to sow. The planter, all the while, as a matter of course, believed that the padree was dissuading them. One day, when I left my station to pay a visit to a distant Brother-Missionary, Mr. G. Smith, availed himself of the opportunity, came in all haste to the Meliaputta village, and told the people that he would "in a moment destroy their village," if they did not sow indigo. Thus the ryots were obliged to say they would, and forthwith the advances were forced upon them for the first time and for the last. For why should a planter repeat the advances to such ryots that have become his own tenants or serfs? All he wants is, to have all the names of his tenants down in his contract book. After this little process is over, the ryot is said to have made contract, and considered bound to sow indigo all his life—without ever getting fresh advances. Nay, this sort of contract is not even dissolvable with the decease of both the planter and the ryots. The new planter, as a matter of course, considers the son of the deceased father bound to sow indigo all his life-time, without repeating the ceremony of making contract. Nay, I know cases where already grandsons have inherited a so-called indigo contract down from their grandfathers; and as they all the while had the idea as if the planters and the Company were identities, they, as good subjects, quietly submitted to it, and for an occasional groan they were punished and publicly slandered and libelled by the newspapers and even in reports of missionary societies. (I can never forget that the *Hurkuru* should have been able to quote whole passages from the Baptist Missionary Society's Secretary, Mr. Underhill's report in favour of the planters and against the ryots, and as a negation of what a missionary with his own eyes has witnessed for years.) But I must proceed to describe the process of making contract in the village Pootimary close to my old compound, and of which the planter is not the landlord. This happened after the Hurra Factory was bought by the Nischindipore Concern (for before this happened never a single ryot complained to me of any manager of that factory or its joint factory over at Chundraghat). One day, namely, the first munduls—some of them the landlords of my mission premises and Christian little village—of Pootimary came to me, along with some Christians, crying

and saying, to-day they had, for the first time in their life, been dishonoured, *i. e.*, beaten. The saheb of the Hurra Factory had been in the village and offered them advances. When they refused taking them, he threw the rupees down to their feet, and when they would not pick them up, the saheb obliged them to do so with his whip. But as I was then not yet fully aware of the Nischindipore system, (nor was it so bad, it must be confessed, as it is now, under the special care of its present head manager,) would not interfere, and they were left to their miserable fate. Only about eight rupees, forced upon some poor Christians who held neither jumma lands, nor had any ploughs or cows, at the time, I obliged the planter to take back. Now to return to Meliaputta: To those men who at the day of concluding contract are not at home, advances for certain beegahs were sent to them, and their names entered into the blue-book without any ceremony at all. One of them was a respectable but poor Christian. Three rupees were sent to him as an advance for one beegah and a half. When the money was given to him, he said, "now we are done for, and called his son, born to him that day, Neelmony, *i. e.*, indigo pearl." By and bye his one beegah and a half were increased to three, (*i. e.*, factory beegahs, but five zemindary beegahs were measuaed away,) without advance. Last year he delivered 16 carts of indigo, which at the factory were measured into 12 bundles, for which he got Co.'s rupees 3. How much of this the factory servants allowed him to take to his home, I forget, but the account of his expenses is before me, and amounts to Co.'s rs. 17-5. But you must remember he got off easiest. I have got before me 400 other accounts that will shock any one. Now a good number of such people, and others who have been suffering infinitely more, are just now imprisoned at Damoorhoodda, near Nischindipoor, with their feet in the stock, and tortured in several ways to make them confess to having taken advances. Those who can are willing to pay the heavy fines enacted, but they are not accepted; others who cannot pay, willingly go to jail, but from them money is wanted, or a promise to sow indigo.

In haste

Yours faithfully,

C. BOMWETSCH.

Santipore, 17th April, 1860

## A MISSIONARY AND THE PLANTERS.

*To the Editor of the "Bengal Harkara."*

SIR,—The Daily Press here, being all on the side of the Indigo Planting interests, announce that peace and order are prevailing now in the Indigo Districts, with few exceptions. I have information of a different kind however, and from trustworthy sources: it is a peace procured by the dungeon and the stocks—by Magistrates pandering to the interests of planters, the Magistrate gets good cheer in the Planters' house: of course he is not ungrateful enough to give a decision in favour of the ryot, which, besides, would bring on him the abuse of the Calcutta Press. The unjust deeds of certain Magistrates are noted, and in due time will come to light.

A "reign of terror" exists in certain districts. Factory godowns, had they ears, could tell sad accounts of the sufferings of ryots. Yes, sir, certain planters can make use of Black Holes as well as Suraja Dowla did, while the violation of their daughters will teach ryots how they complain of the Indigo sahib.

You may say, sir, oh! the Commission will investigate this. The reign of terror, sir, the stocks and the black holes, are rapidly drilling ryots never at any time possessed of courage, *into silence*. *A ryot's life will soon not be safe who bears testimony against the planter*: as for the Commission, the well applied bribes and the black hole will make the ryot testify to any thing the planter wishes, and the Commission will fail in eliciting truth.

Let me ask you,—Is an Austrian policy to be carried out in this country? We have already the beginning of it, and Mr. Wilson may yet be the Radeztky of India. He is well intentioned, but he is allowing himself to drift on with the Calcutta current.

Yours, &c,  
A MISSIONARY.

25th April, 1860.













